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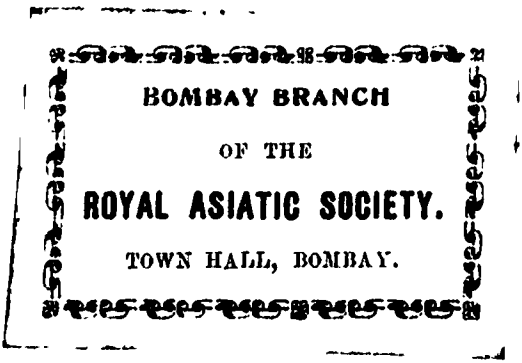

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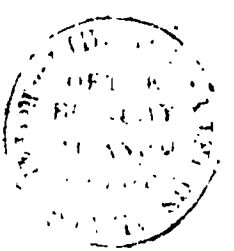
VOL. II.



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FROM HIS

FIRST INTRODUCTION TO PRACTICE;

INCLUDING

TWENTY YEARS' WANDERINGS

THROUGH

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THE RAMBLE.

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It was my original intention to have proceeded in the spring to St. Petersburg, by way of Warsaw, but the indisposition of my colleague, into whose hands I was to deliver my charge, changed my whole plan; and as he was determined to go to Carlsbad, so I was requested to continue my services, and, instead of going direct to St. Petersburg, to accompany the family to Odessa, where the Count would arrive in the month of July, to be near the army invading the country of Sultan Mahmoud.

I had no objection to this arrangement, for it would allow me to travel over a vast tract of country; and, moreover, the chance of being presented at court was not without its influence. My predecessor had, through the interest of the family to which I was

attached, obtained the title of *Médécin de la Cour*, and as I stood much in the same position as himself, I anticipated this honour. Indeed, I was promised it by him who as yet had never deceived me. I appreciated, perhaps more than it deserved, the opinion of Touchstone: —

"Wast ever in court, shepherd?

No, truly.

Then thou art damned.

Nay, I hope.

Truly thou art damned, like an ill roasted egg, all on one side.

For not being at court —your reason?

Why, *if thou* never wast at court, thou never saw'st good manners; if thou never saw'st good manners, then thy manners must be wicked, and wickedness is sin, and sin is damnation."

Not wishing to be in the "perilous" state of the shepherd, I felt glad of so good an opportunity of going to court, so that I made arrangements to accompany the family when and where they pleased.

The days began to lengthen; and, although the weather was very cold, still we could venture out and make excursions in the neighbourhood.

Not far from Cracow a mineral spring had been discovered, and some pains had been taken to bring it into repute, but it was too near home to be efficacious. The poor, indeed, benefited by it, and the Count had erected an hospital upon the spot. Not far from the spring there were mines of coal and zinc. The former were a great blessing to the people,

for the country is bare upon these banks of the Vistula, and wood fuel quite out of the reach of the peasant's purse. Coals are sold at a moderate rate, and the Count supplied them gratuitously to the very necessitous.

I descended into the mine, but could not penetrate very deep, for the steam engine which pumped out the water from the bottom of the pit was not at work, and the water had consequently accumulated to some depth. The zinc is in too great abundance in the country to make its extraction from the ore a profitable speculation.

In the usual way, therefore, of killing time, I awaited the season which would allow us to commence our long march; for we had decided to wait for warm weather. It is well enough for a single man to travel at all seasons; but a cavalcade in which the women and children left the lords of the creation much in the minority, does not march easily through a country where there is no accommodation in the shape of hostelries. We were provided with all the passports necessary to secure a good reception at the different mansions of the nobility; but these were few and far between.

It was at length determined to get under weigh, notwithstanding the piercing blast of a north-easter; but, as we were to sojourn at a castle only two days' journey from Cracow, we braved its blast. We travelled *en veturino*, and passed the first night at a miserable Jew village. We could not even procure

a tea-pot at our hotel, and we put the tea into a soup dish, poured boiling water upon it, covered it over with a plate, and, when sufficiently infused, ladled it out into glasses. The following day we found ourselves in more comfortable quarters, for we arrived in time for dinner at Landcut. The castle belonged to a brother of my host, and it is, without exception, the finest which I have yet seen in my travels, and, I may add, the only one which reminded me of an English baronial domain.

The country around is more picturesque than that in which the republic of Cracow is situated. In the immediate neighbourhood of the residence there is a long sweep of meadow land, enlivened by the course of the Vistula, and the view is bounded by forests. The Carpacks, exhausting themselves in hillocks, make a continual break in the prospect. The once Polish province of Gallicia is fertile and productive, and it is very thickly peopled. The peasantry are poor and wretched in the extreme.

As we journeyed towards Landcut, our carriages were continually surrounded by gaunt, meagre spectres, begging alms. Even the cattle seemed worthy of their owners; small, lean and lank beasts, which seemed hardly capable of dragging their own bones along. Wherever a rise of ground presented itself, there were sure to be seen in the adjoining ditch the bones of the skeleton of some horse, which had been exhausted even to death in trying to drag the load up the hill.

The year had advanced as far only as the month of

June, and still many of the peasants had no corn left. Many were already inscribed in the books, *i. e.* had applied for relief in kind, which must be repaid with interest at harvest time. Children in the fields were seen plucking the leaves of the wild sorrel, which, boiled in milk, constitute a principal part of their food at this season.

I was informed, by a medical man residing upon the estate, that the people are subject to a disease at the commencement of autumn which is called in the country *blaue krankheit* (blue sickness). It is ushered in by diarrhœa and vomiting. The skin soon becomes of a dark blue cast; a cold, clammy sweat issues from the pores; cramps occur in the extremities; the eyes sink deep into their orbits, and the patient dies in a few hours. Few ever recover, and no one plan of treatment seems more efficacious than another. Such was the description which I received of a complaint which I now recognise as cholera morbus.

Many scenes of misery and wretchedness, which I witnessed during our sojourn here, diminished much of the pleasure which the splendid mansion, its fine gardens, with the Dutch pavilions, and all the other appurtenances of grandeur, would otherwise have afforded me. I was not as yet (to use that most expressive term) *used to it;* nor had I yet fully appreciated the fact, that nothing steels the heart so much against misery as the sight of it often repeated.

In the proprietor of these domains, we found one

of the best specimens of Polish nobility — a gentleman and a scholar, upright in all his dealings, kind and compassionate towards his fellow-creatures, doing as much good as lay within his means. The nobility are cruelly taxed in Gallicia, and the burgher grows fat where the seigneur starves. It seems, indeed, to be the object of the government to get possession of the whole province. By emptying the purses of the nobility, they necessarily destroy their political influence. There are but few millionaires in Austrian Poland. Landed property is so heavily taxed, that the proprietors can reap but little when the lion has taken his share. Funded property has not proved to be very secure, for more than twice has the bank of Austria refused payment. It is, as Lord Findlater has inscribed upon the monument at Carlsbad, a paternal government, which rewards and punishes its children according to their deserts, encouraging the humble and meek, but repressing the arrogant and high-minded, and making them kiss the rod, to convince them that riches are the root of all evil.

The weather continued very cold during the whole of May, *but it was an extraordinary season*, and we were often confined to the house when we wished to be rambling in the fields. We remained four weeks at Landcut.

The weather becoming much milder in the beginning of June, we determined at length upon setting out in earnest, and completing our journey. Few people have more prejudices than the Poles with

respect to the good or ill omens attending a journey; and if they do not actually consult the stars, they believe in all the common assertions regarding lucky days, and taking leave of friends. Nothing will induce them to commence a journey on a Friday; nor, if they can help it, will they ever take leave of any body. I have been frequently taken in by my ignorance of this circumstance. Often have I left a traveller in the evening, with the injunction to wait upon him professionally the next morning, and with the concluding sentence *sans adieu* ringing in my ears; but upon seeking him the following morning, at the appointed hour, I have found that my patient had left me his compliments in fee two hours before. Let not this be taken in a sense detrimental to his honour. It was not in order to bilk the doctor of his fee that he used this *ruse*, but to avoid the ill luck of taking leave.

Such was the case with an old nobleman in whose society I had passed many happy hours during my stay at Landcut. His was a character worthy of better descriptive powers than mine to do it justice. He had a strange and fanciful belief in the influence of precious stones upon the life of man. Of these he had a collection, and had so arranged them in his own mind, as to make himself believe that each month of the year had its guardian jewel, and that man would be more or less lucky as he happened to be born under the presiding influence of different gems. January was controlled by the ruby; February by

the diamond; March by the amethyst, and so on throughout the whole calendar. Luckily for himself, he happened to be born in the first month, over which presided his favourite gem; and he informed me, with much kindness of expression, that I was lucky also in my presiding amethyst, however unlucky I might be in my stars. He was a great politician, and one of the old school. He was averse to all kinds of innovations; he would not even listen to the voice of philanthropy, nor would he believe in the distresses of the poor, nor of the expediency of improving their condition, if the possibility even existed. He hated all public charities; never subscribed to any; nor had he any idea of such a science as political economy. He held in abhorrence all kinds of machinery which tended to throw the manual labourer out of work.

He pointed to his peasants, and asked me of what use manufactures could be to people who wore a sheep's skin in winter, and whose wives wove them a linen dress for the summer? He would hear of no improvements in the breed of cattle. Little horses were better than large ones, because they were hardier, and were more economically fed. As to constitutions and charts, he believed them to be instituted for no other purpose than for impeding the progress of government. Notwithstanding all these illiberal ideas, he was a gentleman and a scholar, and a man of very considerable mental capacity. He had travelled all over Europe; had been in the United States, and was passionately

fond of the English, of whose institutions he spoke with enthusiasm. If you spoke to him of the French, he got red all over, and was threatened with apoplexy. I had a long conversation with him upon politics, on the eve of our departure, and I was surprised to find a man so well versed, as he seemed to be, in the political bearings of Great Britain. I had just returned from an evening's ramble, and found him, as usual, smoking his long wooden pipe, upon the balcony of the castle, from whence he could view the Vistula winding its course through fertile meadows and enlivening the scene. He spoke English like a native, and we soon entered into conversation, for topics are never wanting to draw those together who unite spontaneously and form an atomic combination, though in different proportions. Joking upon my physiognomy, which he declared to be that of a true Englishman, he launched out upon the subject of our national, original, and singular conduct towards strangers.

"When I was in England," he continued, "I was invited to dine with Lord ———, and happening to have on my right hand a young lady, to whom I had not been introduced, I nevertheless addressed my conversation to her. Instead of a reply, she looked indignantly at me, and, turning to her neighbour, observed, 'He has had the impudence to speak to me!' It is true this happened some forty years ago, and either John Bull is not so eccentric as he was, or we are more used to him."

The great intercourse, I observed, between people, separated as they had been by so long a war, had naturally produced a good effect, and formed a kind of amalgamation which is ——— "Very much to be deprecated," said the Count.

"You were much better in olden times, and had more nationality, which, considering your insular position and your small territory, was very necessary to the establishment of that belief which you professed, viz. that you were the lords of the universe—you could do every thing better than your neighbours; nothing was good that was not sterling. This very spirit, these very ideas, enabled you to do what you did. This gained you half your battles, for there is nothing more true than '*Possunt quia posse videntur.*' Your lion and unicorn stood you in good service. Now the thing is somewhat changed. You have found other nations than China and Japan, and by amalgamating yourselves, as you style it, you have no better opinion of others, but you have not so good an opinion of yourselves."

You take a very different view of the matter to what I have ever heard of it, I replied. It has generally been laid down as a maxim, that a man, by increasing his knowledge, increases his enjoyments, and makes himself more useful to society. Man requires a whetstone, as Horace has observed; and how is he enabled to obtain this but by travelling, and by conversing with people of different nations? By learning their opinions, and by discussing them, is he not enabled to correct what may be vicious at

home, by borrowing some little good from abroad? Is it not for the advantage of science, of commerce, and of the fine arts in general?

"You lose your nationality," said the Count, "and this is of much more consequence to you. Some people object to sending their families to France, lest they should imbibe bad French principles from their connection with French society. They have much more to fear from their own countrymen, for there is a sad mixture of English society on the Continent, and the thing is getting daily worse. At the commencement, the rich travelled for curiosity, which is now pretty well gratified, or rather satisfied; then came the black-legs in shoals; and now those who have neither character nor money, nor any recommendation but their mere impudence,—and I appeal to you if you would yourself be seen in the society of the *Rue de la Paix*, or the *Rue de Helder*, were you to meet it again in England?"

Here I shook my head, and allowed that the Count was right.

"You shake your head," he replied, "and yet you plead guilty, for you frequent this society daily, yourself, and yet you allow yourself to be ashamed of it. You would not know Mrs. ——— in London, and yet you say you knew her at Paris. Pray, were you introduced to her?"

No, I replied. It is an English custom, which is not followed abroad, where one speaks to one's neighbour without any thing of the kind.

"This is the precise point to which I wished to

bring you, and prove to you that the old English custom of waiting for an introduction before you form acquaintances with people, is not so bad a one after all. Had you persevered in its use, you would not now have the promiscuous society you have, and of which you are ashamed. You think to cut these people when and where you please; the thing is less easy than you imagine. They may not be so readily disposed to cut you. They will boast of your acquaintance on the other side of the water, which will make others less anxious to do so than they were before. This, therefore, I insist upon it, is one of the disadvantages which has arisen from your favourite amalgamation, as you style it. You have violated one of your old habits; you have taken off the yoke of prudent restraint; you have made yourselves cheap; and, believe me, were I of an age to marry, and disposed again to enter the matrimonial state with a foreigner, I know no one I should be more disposed to select than the young lady (she was very pretty," said the old Count, stroking down his face) "who said I had the impudence to speak to her without being introduced!

"It is true that the arts and sciences are promoted by national intercourse. I grant the position; but how many artists are there who travel for the purposes merely of their profession? The fine arts, after all, are not national in England. It is not the country nor the soil for them. The English are a matter-of-fact people; they are not so inventive as many, but they perfect the imaginations of others. Is it of any

consequence to the nation that a few dilettanti should display their ignorance concerning Titian or Correggio? As to professional men, they will always find the means, even in poor, worthless, Gothic old England, of pursuing their profession to the best advantages: but let them travel; they are but a few, and bring nothing bad away with them, unless they force a taste which is not natural to, and consequently cannot thrive in, England. As to the sciences, it is very different. The communications of scientific men with each other may be turned to good account. Chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, all require it; but still much may be done by letter. It is doubtful if Newton and La Place would have done more, had they lived together in the Institute, than they did when employed separately. Davy had no need of Thenard, nor Gay Lussac of Murray; all eminent men, and I will give no preference. If, as is the case, however, the Germans and French never think of coming to us, why should we go to them? I am speaking as an Englishman," said the Count. "I again repeat, however, that there is good, much good to be derived from such amalgamation; but what I wish to impress upon you, my friend, is this — that those who talk so much about it are just the people who can turn it to no account. The amalgamators can themselves form no amalgams. Nothing is so common as to hear your English puppies (I mean nothing personal) talk of the advantages of travelling; of its opening the mind; expanding the views; breaking out of the cage in which their genius has been so long cramped; of pro-

moting the arts and sciences; nay, the cause of humanity and the welfare of mankind. But it is late; the dew is falling; and you, as a doctor, ought to have warned me of the risk I run in sitting out so late. *Sans adieu,*" he uttered, as he rose to go to his chamber, "we shall meet to-morrow at breakfast."

I found, upon leaving my room at eight o'clock, that the Count had started at six. This was his usual plan of escape.

The same kind of prejudice which deprived me of more of the Count's conversation detained us till towards evening, although we were ready to start in the morning; but it was Thursday. It was impossible to commence the journey on the following day, so the party decided upon performing one stage of the road on the Thursday, and we all slept at a neighbouring nobleman's shooting box.

So far so good, I observed, as I happened to hand one of the ladies in to supper. "*Taisez vous, mon cher Docteur,*" she exclaimed; "had the Countess —— heard you say so, she would not have continued the journey. There is nothing so unlucky as that expression."

The reproof did not pass unheeded, for I had already understood enough of the Polish character to know that, of all people in the world, they most disliked disagreeable truths, or sayings which clash with their received opinions.

There is in England a class of people who pique themselves upon telling home truths, upon saying

harsh things, and what they call letting others know their mind. They make a kind of virtue of it. They think such proceedings savour of independence of character, and pass for sterling coin. Such I would recommend never to think of visiting Poland.

Previous to quitting Paris, I received the following piece of advice from an old gentleman who well knew the country. "*Vous allez passer l'hiver en Pologne, mon cher.*" I replied in the affirmative. "*Tachez de bien parler Français, de jouer bien aux billiards, et vous ferez votre chemin.*" It was wholesome advice, and I endeavoured to act up to the spirit, if not to the letter, of it. Upon the present occasion, I promised the lady to make no more silly observations; and, quaffing off some few glasses of champagne, we afterwards all parted for the night.

We started early in the morning and proceeded towards Lemberg, but halted two days at a nobleman's house on the road, and amused ourselves as well as we could. We were a formidable party, and formed an imposing cavalcade, consisting of six carriages and forty horses. We did little but eat and drink during the time that we remained at Count ——. There was in fact nothing else to do, unless we followed the example of our host, who employed all his spare time in embroidery. It is curious to see a man working with worsted upon canvas: to see a tailor is natural enough, but to see a nobleman embroider for his own pleasure is as ridiculous as it is uncommon.

After two days' such recreation we started for Lemberg, and arrived there during the time of the annual fair, so that the town was full. The town itself is neat and well built. It is situated between two great high mounds of sand, and is very low, and bounded upon one side by an immense pool of stagnant water, which serves as an *Ecole de Natation.* It inspired me at once with a dread of malaria; and I congratulated myself, upon quitting it the following day, that none of us had experienced the symptoms of ague, nor of *tic douloureux,* nor of the hundred pains and aches which are attributed by some to this occult influence.

It was Sunday evening, and there was an opera performed in the public gardens. It was "*La Precioza,*" played in Polish, and the theatre was well attended. Among the audience I discovered my friend the secretary. He recognised me also, came up to me, held out his hand, and began to converse as if nothing had transpired. I did not encourage him, however, to be very familiar. He had found the means of ingratiating himself with an English musician, who was travelling towards Odessa, and whom I met by chance at Olmutz on my road to Cracow. He had made him believe all that he wished, and probably might have pillaged him eventually, had I not intervened to warn him of the enemy.

When my old friend, the Count, talked to me of English eccentricity, I thought to myself, what would he have said had he known the musician and heard him give his opinions upon the country, and speak of

the people among whom he was tarrying? So disgusted was he with the arbitrary system, and with the apparent poverty which seemed to surround him, that he could not contain himself, but launched out into execrations against the government, "wishing that the Almighty might send an angel, with a flaming sword and a pair of fiery wings, to destroy them all." This was uttered too in a coffee-house, and in public.

It is singular how tolerant all foreigners are towards the English; how much they will bear from them, without being excited to anger; and how seldom even the most despotic governments take notice of their outrageous conduct. Whence is it that so much deference is paid them? Why are they to escape whole, when for similar offences a Frenchman or an Italian would be put in prison? "Pshaw, it is only an Englishman; when he has sworn himself easy, there is no more harm in him. He has no idea of intriguing or interfering with the government itself. He curses his own all day long. Allow him the privilege of doing as much for others." Whether such be the reasoning I know not, but certain it is that an Englishman will get *into* a scrape, and *out* of a scrape, sooner than a man of any other nation; and he asserts his right to liberty of speech so strenuously, that he persuades others that it is useless to attempt to restrain him.

So it was with my countryman. He had been disappointed in his expectations, so that the measure of his wrath was full. He had quitted Florence,

where he had resided for some years, with the idea of making a fortune in Russia; and imagined that, by giving a concert in the different towns through which he passed, he should defray all his expenses, and fill his pockets into the bargain. Of all men in the world, however, he was the least likely to succeed in his undertakings; not but that he was a first-rate musician, but he seemed to think that, as such, every body should show, by their submission to his eccentricities, how they appreciated his talents. As to his condescending to be civil to any body, no such idea entered his head. He treated all alike, and he would tell a princess to open her mouth wider, and not squall like a peacock, where another music-master would have hardly ventured to have intruded a suggestion. As a teacher for children he was inimitable, for he never passed over the slightest fault, and he either made them learn, or he broke their hearts.

It happened that his wife was taken ill during my stay in Lemberg, and he begged me to see her. She was a striking contrast to himself; a mild, placid woman, who, having in vain endeavoured to cure her husband of his impolitic conduct, gave it up as hopeless, and now, making a virtue of necessity, laughed at the very things which perhaps had formerly made her weep.

We dissuaded him from going to Warsaw, whither he was originally bent; but as the court of St. Petersburg was at Odessa, and as the Polish army was not in Warsaw, our party advised him to alter his course

and follow us in our track towards Odessa. This he at length consented to do, not without some suspicions, however, as to the purity of the advice which was given him, and he considered his acquiescence as a kind of favour done to those who had no idea but of wishing to be useful to him. But enough of him for the present.

We left the Englishman, then, in Lemberg, to bargain with the Jews for his conveyance to Odessa; and sadly was he taken in, as it proved in the sequel. Not aware of the difference between a silver and a paper ruble, he paid the former for the latter, during the space of half his journey.*

Soon after leaving Lemberg, we descended a very steep hill; from the top of which we beheld an immense plain, as flat and boundless as the sea. I shall not easily forget this hill; it was the last I saw between Lemberg and Odessa. I soon perceived a difference in the appearance of things in general, and particularly in some of the churches; for you may always distinguish a Greek from a Roman Catholic church.

The original inhabitants of Russia came from this neighbourhood; they were called Russini, for Russians and Muscovites were once distinct people; but Catherine and her successors have much simplified difficulties of this nature.

The Greek churches met with in this part of the

* Silver ruble four times the value of paper.

country are all of wood. They have a dome and three minarets, which serve as a resting-place for the jack-daws, birds abounding in Russia. The belfry always stands apart from the church. The Greek or double cross crowns each minaret.

About a league from Brody, we quitted the chaussée, for we now were no longer in Austria, but in the precincts of a free town; so free, indeed, that the inhabitants, who were almost entirely Jews, have often petitioned for its freedom to be withdrawn. They are free to buy and sell whatever they please within their own boundary; but so sharp are the custom-house officers, since the new system has been adopted, that neither Jew nor Christian can smuggle a yard of cloth.

Time was when the town of Brody vied with Hamburgh in its commercial activity: but it was all done by smuggling; for such was the corruption of those times, that the Jews of Brody bribed the whole of the custom-house officers between that town and St. Petersburg; and a contraband trade was carried on, in spite of the government, to the utter ruin of its revenue. "*Nous avons changé tout cela,*" says Mr. Cancrin, the present Russian financier. Three lines of barriers are interposed between the two frontiers, nor can Jew or Gentile escape with a pocket-handkerchief, such is the vigilance of the police; and yet they may be bribed, as we proved ourselves the following day, when our cavalcade passed the barriers with a silver key.

During our stay in Brody, we were lodged in an old and dilapidated castle, once capable of defence, the former residence of Count ——, to whom, indeed, the whole town itself belonged. He had lately paid the debt of nature, and died in the bed which he had not quitted for many years previous. He was an eccentric character, but a man of talent and information; and though rational upon all other points, he seemed to be hardly so upon one, which was an idea of living longer by always remaining in bed. He actually lived, not merely in his chamber, but in his bed, for many years of his life, and his greatest consolation was derived from reading accounts in the papers of people dying by falling off their horses, or by the upsetting of carriages, or by bathing in the river, or by congestions of blood to the head from over exertion in walking, in running, jumping, &c. &c. He hugged himself upon the perusal of such accounts, and congratulated himself that such accidents could not happen to him. He received his guests as regularly as at any former period of his life, for no infirmity of the body compelled him to adopt this resolution. He read, wrote, took his meals, and lived, in fact, more comfortably in his bed, than Diogenes in his tub. He was no cynic, no sectarian, no philosopher; he was only known by the name of the Count who always lived in his bed. This was the variety of the species. It happened also that he died in his bed; and that, too, just at the time when he was perfectly convinced of the

soundness of his doctrines. He died just as he had passed by all the dangers. Had he lived a little longer, he might perhaps have lived for ever, and we should have had a new sect of religionists—the sect *what* never left their beds.

CHAP. XIV.

QUIT AUSTRIA. RUSSIAN CUSTOM-HOUSE. EXAMINATION OF BAGGAGE WAGGON. CONDUCT OF VALET. SALARIES OF OFFICERS. BRIBERY. SLAVOUTA. PRINCE S——. UKRANIAN MINSTRELS. STUD OF HORSES. CONSULTED BY JEWESS. HEBREW PRINTED IN SLAVOUTA. CONSUMPTIVE COLLEAGUE. RUSSIAN DRIVERS. BURDICHEFF. CONSCRIPTS. STATION-HOUSES FOR SIBERIAN CONVICTS. FATAL MISTAKE FROM SIMILARITY OF NAME. ARRIVAL AT THE CELEBRATED OLD COUNTESS ——'S ESTATES. DESCRIPTION OF HOSTESS. GARDENS. MEET AGAIN WITH OLD COUNT, WHO RENEWS POLITICAL DISCUSSION.

BEFORE we started in the morning, we were importuned by hundreds of Jews, who had brought with them quantities of gloves, silks, muslins, &c., and implored us to buy their merchandise. Each of the party dealt with them, in spite of the impossibility of getting the contraband merchandise through the barrier; but all things are possible with Jews and government officers.

Soon after our caravan quitted the castle, we arrived at a barrier, a long line of spiked paling, open for a space sufficient to allow something very like a turnpike-house and a turnpike-gate. Two dragoons were stationed at it, the one on horseback, and the other on foot. The latter demanded our passports, which we gave to his mounted companion, who rode

off with them at full gallop. We waited nearly an hour before he returned; but, upon his arrival, we were all allowed to pass with our carriages through the gate, and proceeded slowly along for about a mile, when we arrived at another barrier, where there was a house of rather larger dimensions than at the former paling. As soon as we halted, the jacks in office came out and ordered us all to walk into the bureau. The first thing to be done was to measure all our noses, in order to see if they tallied with the dimensions specified in the passports. Whilst this was performing, ———, the leader of our van, begged to speak with the chief responsible person, and slipped (accidentally) twenty-five ducats into his hand.

The next operation was to examine all the carriages, to unpack every box, to look into every parcel, to unfold every pair of stockings, all of which was performed upon the contents of my unfortunate calash, but by some unforeseen event, during the time the soldiers were employed in ransacking my carriage in which there was nothing, the others, in which there might have been some little thing, drove quietly off; and by the time I had repacked all my clothes, they were fairly out of sight, had passed through the third barrier, and were out of jeopardy.

What surprised me most, was, the pacific conduct of my Polish servant, who, accustomed to storm and rave at whatever crossed him or gave him trouble in France or Germany, did not now open his mouth. — When all was ready, we received a kind of permit, which we showed at the third barrier, where a cossack

was stationed, with lance in hand, and in full uniform." He allowed us to pass, and we rolled on to Radziwilloff, where we found all the carriages in the inn yard, and the party at dinner.

My servant now explained to me the cause of his good behaviour; he had been smuggling as much as he could stow about his own person, and in order to evade being searched, assisted the officers in searching my effects. Once out of their reach, he began to vociferate, "*Canaille, cochon,*" and all his usual string of epithets.

We had but sorry fare for dinner, but I was now for the first time in Russia, and the novelty of the scenery, its *beauty and richness,* all gratified my *nobler* senses so much, that eating was a secondary consideration.

To be serious, it was appalling to leave civilisation behind, and enter this gloomy land. There was nothing that you could look upon with pleasure for a moment: — a vast plain, with a wide attempt at a straight road running through it, a pool of water, the cackling of some Jews, who were disputing among themselves as to the money they should demand for escorting us to our destination.

Such was my first introduction to Russia. Such was the external appearance of things, and I was not more pleased with the moral aspect of affairs when the Count detailed to me the history of what had passed at the custom-house.

"I bribed the officer," he informed me, "to let all the carriages pass; but, in order to do something, it

was necessary to make believe, at least, and they pitched upon your calash, as the least likely to contain any thing. Have they seized any of your things?" asked the Count.

Only my Bible, I replied, and a few medical books.

"Oh, you will get them again."

I was not uneasy about them.

"What do you suppose would have been the consequence had I not paid so liberally? Why, we should have been detained all the day, and every thing, new and old, taken from us; the new would be taken because it was contraband—the old to keep the new company."

Is there no redress? I asked.

"Redress!" replied the Count. "What! wait till an order comes from St. Petersburg, and then be in the wrong box? No, that is not the question. The fact is, that had I not paid handsomely at first, I should have been obliged to have paid double the sum to have got our things released, had they once been seized; and God knows if I could have done it."

This is a strange order of things. A little bribery to underlings is necessary in all countries, it is a *passe-partout;* but to offer such men as those who were employed in the office, and whose dress and appearance were those of gentlemen, is to me very singular.

"Well," said the Count, "these very men who wear uniforms, and swords, and speak French, are so ill paid by the government, that they must plunder in their own defence. There is not one of them who receives more per annum than the sum which I gave

to let us pass through. Stop," said the Count, "twenty-five ducats! Yes, perhaps they may receive four hundred rubles paper per annum (about 17*l.* sterling), and with this they must buy their uniforms, and clothe and feed their families."

It is impossible, I said.

"It is quite true," he replied, "but we travellers are well mulcted for it."

I then related to him what had happened to me in Germany when I arrived on the Austrian frontier. I described the custom-house officers there to be men of a lower rank in society, and related how I answered all the interrogatories which were put to me. He smiled, and said:

"My good sir, it is well you did not exercise your wit in a similar way upon this occasion."

Why not? what harm was there in it?

"Oh, no harm; but had you done so, at least alone, and without my protection, you would have remained where you were for six months. Your passport would have been taken from you, and you would have been lodged in a little room adjoining, where all necessary food would have been supplied you as long as your money lasted, and in the course of time your reprieve would have come from Petersburg, allowing you to retrace your steps as fast as possible, but not to proceed a step forward in the imperial domains."

Very comfortable, I thought to myself. And it is for this that I have left civilised Europe! But then,

so soon to make my fortune, and return a rich man. What fish would not take a hook baited with such tempting food?

In the mean time the horses were put to, and all was ready for a new start, upon, to me, new ground. We travelled *en veturino*, as the Italians style it, a much more economical, but much less expeditious way than by the post. We hired Jew horses, and drivers, who for a stipulated sum engaged to take us to our journey's end at the rate of so many versts* per day.

I know not where we slept, but it was upon straw, and very soundly too as far as I was concerned. We had all kinds of provisions in the Fourgon which preceded us, and we supped well, and retired to our beds of straw about ten o'clock. At seven o'clock the next morning the coffee was ready, and we were again upon wing. I shall halt at Slavouta, the property of Prince Sangoushko, a relation of the Count's, who resided in the middle of a wood. Here we were entertained in the most hospitable manner, and here I saw some of the remains of the feudal customs of Poland; for all the country through which we had hitherto passed, was a country conquered from Poland.

The young prince, who is now paying the price of his patriotism in Siberia, had one of the finest studs of horses in the empire. He was a long while in England, and had imbibed a taste for horses and field sports, which he in no wise disgraced. He named all

* Three versts make two English miles.

his horses after our statesmen; there was Canning and Grey, in quadrupedal form.

We made up for our meals, taken *en poste* during the last few days, by a well-dressed dinner at the Prince's table; and as we were taking our dessert, our ears were greeted by the warblings of Ukranian boys, accompanied by a kind of instrument resembling a guitar. It was soft and sweet to the soul, such as I never heard before, and have never heard since. The melancholy feelings associated with this recollection, as regards the fate of that generous and noble patriot, make me believe that there was something supernatural in the tone of those boys' voices, as they now seem to resound in my ears.

When we were refreshed, and *après le café*, we strolled about the grounds, which require no description, and then examined the horses, one by one, as the grooms led them out. They were noble animals, all boasting more or less Turkish blood, and they snorted and threw their heads on high, as if proud of their origin. The prince ordered his groom to saddle two of them, and both master and groom mounting, rode a race at full speed.

The evening's amusement terminated with light refreshments and music, and we retired to rest, as if in an enchanted castle; and we *were* enchanted. The following morning I was beset as usual by my friends the Jews, all of whom came to consult me. A more quacking race of people does not exist, and they are always swallowing some kind of medicine. It was curious to watch the physiognomies of some of them, as

they doubted within themselves whether they should offer me a fee. I remember a poor woman, and a pretty young woman she was, too, which makes me remember her so well; though a pretty Jewess is no uncommon sight in Poland; but, after taking the prescription in her hand, she fell upon her knees, and began to bless me, and then she cried, and, putting her hands to her head, she took off her cap, and under this was a second and less ornamental cap, which she also removed, and under this was a pocket-handkerchief, and in removing this she wept bitterly, and when she had removed it, she felt in one corner of the rag for a piece of money of the value of sixpence, and bursting into tears she offered it to me as a fee.

I had determined not to *take* a single sou, but I could not determine not to *give* her — what! a single sou! It was enough to melt a heart of stone to see a sweet pretty woman at one's feet in tears, and offering sixpence as a medical fee!

Slavouta is called a town, without possessing one building worthy the name of a house. But there is this worthy of mention, that a Hebrew press once existed here, and that the Old Testament was printed to an immense extent, and the books printed at Slavouta were sold in Jerusalem, as preferable to most others. The government has put a stop to this, by compelling the Jews to print the translation of the Hebrew into Polish, on the alternate pages. This has spoiled their sale of Testaments, a piece of impolitic and vexatious tyranny.

I was consulted by a poor colleague upon his own

case. He was in the last stage of consumption; and his sole object in sending for me seemed to be to persuade me that his lungs were quite sound, and that he was not consumptive. He was convinced that all his illness arose from the tape-worm, and begged to know the plan adopted in England for the expulsion of this animal. He did not think himself strong enough at present to take any specific remedy, but when his strength increased he should try the Fern powder. He was much nearer his end than even I had anticipated. He died the same night, deceived into eternity by the insidious nature of his disease.

Early the next morning the carriages were ready, and the Prince led the van in his droshka, drawn by four horses abreast. The droshka is too well known to need farther description, but a small carriage upon four wheels, drawn by four fine Arabian horses, is not a common sight even in Russia. There is a custom of tying the head of the outside horses down to the breast, by means of a kind of martingale; this causes the horse to prance and snort, to throw out his neck sideways, and to go along upon the canter; and it is the object of the coachman to make the horse in the shafts trot at the same rate that the off horse canters. The custom of tying down their heads is going out of fashion — it is merely for effect, and a piece of unjustifiable cruelty; for it keeps the horse's head and neck in bondage, puts him to a kind of torture, or at least into the fidgets, and he is often seen covered with foam when the shaft horse is quite cool.

The Russian coachmen are wretched drivers. They hold a rein in each hand, and pull right and left as may be, but beyond this they have no idea of manual dexterity in guiding their horses. They have no command of their whip, which is slung round their wrist, and it is a preparation of some seconds to take it in hand, during which time the horses, who, not being hood-winked, see what is going on, jump and kick in anticipation of the blow.

The coachmen never keep their horses at the same steady pace for any distance together, which is unpleasant in the extreme, as the carriage is always dancing about; and although they make the sign of the cross before they mount the box, they are always meeting with accidents from their careless driving. They drive the same horses to an immense distance, and gallop up all the hills. This is their redeeming point.

We passed rapidly through the woods which surrounded the Prince's house, and, soon after emerging from them, we arrived at a small house, situated upon a kind of common, where, as if by enchantment, we found the table spread, and a sumptuous breakfast ready for us. We did justice to it, and, taking leave of our host for the last time, and for ever, pursued our journey. We had fared so well at breakfast, that we required no dinner, and it would have been difficult to have found one, for we passed through a wretched country, with nothing but a few Jews' hovels. I was struck with something about their houses which I could not understand. The houses were all connected

together, both in a line and across the street, by pieces of string not thicker than twine, attached to long slender sticks, which were stuck in the roofs. These were high enough to allow carriages to pass under, when two houses were so connected on opposite sides of the streets. It was explained to me as an attempt to cheat the Bible, or to fulfil a commandment which otherwise could never be obeyed. This commandment forbids them to go from house to house on the Sabbath-day; but as house and house are not particularly specified, so by joining all the houses together, they in reality form but one house, and the injunction is not violated.

We halted for some hours at Burdicheff, a town of some notoriety, and famous for the immense horse fair which is held once or twice a year. The town is chiefly inhabited by Jews, and we found many of the young men in irons, walking about the streets. The imperial innovation of including these people in the conscription for the army, was too new to be much relished, and although resistance was vain, yet desertion was prevalent. To prevent this, therefore, as soon as a Jew was chosen, an iron was fastened to his leg, which allowed him to walk, but not to run away.

Burdicheff, like Brody, has dwindled from a commercial town into a miserable habitation for Jews, who seem to have no employment, and in reference to whom the question seems continually to recur—"Why stand you there all the day idle?"

We had hitherto travelled *en veturino*, but upon quitting Burdicheff we took post horses and proceeded

much quicker than before. We now came into the government roads, marked out as they are every where by the birch planted on either side. At this season they were good, so that we spanked along merrily, and the bell jingled round the horses' necks. A courier had been dispatched the day before, to arrange for the relays, so that no time was lost, and we got swiftly over the ground.

I was busy in conjecturing of what use were the small habitations which we passed on our route, as thickly scattered as the post houses, but insulated from all other habitations. Each was surrounded by a thick set wooden paling, formed of solid trees, pointed at the top, and which are used for park fences in Russia. The paling was so high as to allow of the top of the roof to be seen just peeping above it. In the middle of my conjectures, we happened to arrive just as three soldiers were lodging two prisoners, chained by the hands, in one of them. They are the resting places of the criminals who go on foot to Siberia. Here they repose for the night, and sup upon black bread and water. We afterwards passed several convicts, journeying on with slow step and downcast look. Whenever they met with humankind, they were sure to receive some pittance; the poorest peasant would always put a mite into the hat of the criminal as he held it out *en passant.* There was a great difference in their appearance; some were scarce able to drag their legs along, their backs still smarting from the knout. Others paced it much more merrily; but how did those bear it who were, perhaps, as innocent of

the crimes alleged, as the soldiers who were conducting them? Many have been the instances where a similarity of name has caused an innocent man to be banished to Siberia. The ukase orders John Smith to be sent to Siberia, and the first John Smith that the executive government lays hold of is sent there. I have known a man of noble family banished, because his name appeared in the letter of another who was convicted of treason. It was enough; the pigeon was supposed to be among the crows.

We journeyed on without meeting with any adventures, till we arrived at our half-way house, and entered the gardens of the Countess ———.

It would require the pen of Sir Walter Scott to do justice to the personage to whom the whole neighbourhood belonged, and at whose house we now made a halt. Herself of a noble family, and niece of the famous Potemkin, she had enjoyed in her youth all the advantages which personal charms, high birth, splendid connexions, and court favour could procure. The hero of the north, the minister and master of Catherine, had died in her arms. She had been herself the favourite of the empress. She now in her old age was cherished by the grandson, and was as much alive to the smiles of court favour in her eightieth as she had been in her eighteenth year. Possessed of the most splendid fortune in the whole empire, she was a sovereign in her estates, which were much larger than many of the German principalities.

From such a preface, what will the reader expect

in the description of her person, of her castle, and of her suite?

He will perhaps figure to himself an old lady dressed in the ancient costume of the country, and in a style of great elegance, surrounded by her favourites, seated upon a stately sofa in a Gothic saloon, and probably occupied with some rich embroidery. He will expect to find the bust, the statue, and the portrait of the Empress Catherine in all the rooms of her palace, and his ear may anticipate the sound of blessed majesty upon all opportunities. He will imagine himself at Tillietudlem.

Of all these anticipations, however, few will be realised. He will see and hear enough of her blessed majesty, but here the illusion will end, and he will rather imagine himself in a comfortable inn in Germany, and a good fat hostess for its inhabitant, than suppose that he is contemplating her who once bore the train of Catherine of Russia.

Nothing surprised me more than my introduction to the old Countess. I had expected to find something noble and majestic in her exterior, and I had almost dreaded the presentation. Imagine my surprise when I was ushered by a cossack servant into a small chamber, which was almost bare of furniture. The walls were merely whitewashed, and upon the chimney piece rested an oval cast, in plaster of Paris, of the late empress, which was daubed over with paint. Some logs of wood were hissing beneath, and upon an oaken table were scattered some loose papers and rolls of parchment. The old lady was occupied

with her steward when I entered; but, after having signed a few papers and given him her hand to kiss, he retired, and she returned my bow. I was struck with the beauty of her hand, with its delicateness, its apparent softness and its unwrinkled smoothness. It was worthy of a maiden of eighteen. There was an immense turquoise on the middle finger, which by contrast made the smooth skin appear even more than naturally white.

"I am happy, sir, to make your acquaintance. As an Englishman, sir, you have no doubt seen many fine gardens; but I do not think, sir, that you will find any thing in Poland superior to Alexandrine.

"There is the garden of Potemkin, dedicated to friendship; and, not far off, you will find some trees planted by the Emperor Alexander, at his last visit. You will see his bust surrounded by an iron railing; it was upon that spot that he once took a cup of tea. The pagodas and statues cost me a deal of money; but I paid all ready cash, and got a good discount. My garden has cost me four millions of rubles; but, as the angel said, 'you know, Countess, the money has been spent in the country.'

"You will find in your walks, sir, several pavilions; the windows in them are all of plate glass. I have to thank Bonaparte for them. I made a vow that I would commemorate the expulsion of the French by spending ten thousand rubles in embellishments, and these windows form one of the items.

"In the great pavilion you will find a marble bust of the emperor, and underneath, engraved on a brass

plate, (I suppose you do not read Russ, sir?) but they are the words of the emperor himself—'I will not sheathe my sword whilst an enemy remains in my dominions.'"

She was running on in this style, without having allowed me to put in a word, when a sudden twinge in her face stopped her for a second, and changing her tone of voice, which was mild and harmonious, though sufficiently commanding, she turned to me and said—

"Have you discovered, Doctor, any remedy for the *tic douloureux?* I have been plagued with it these ten years past."

I had now had sufficient opportunity of observing her person, and again admired the beauty of her hand, as she reclined in her Voltaire, and stroked her cheek with two fingers, passing them rapidly over the nerves of the face.

She was of middle stature and stout. Her features retained all the marks of former beauty; her countenance was placid and expressive; her eyes had naturally lost much of their former brightness, but they still retained some of that animation and playful satire which are so strikingly represented in her portrait, painted in her youth, where, reclining against a column, she points with one hand to the bust of Catherine. All the features of this portrait are still traceable in her octogenarian face. She wore a white muslin cap, and the rest of her dress was comprised in a Turkish *robe de chambre.* She took snuff in large quantities, which fell upon her dress.

She was still suffering from pain in her cheek, when the dinner bell rang, and, pointing to the dining room, she begged me not to be ceremonious, and said she would soon follow.

The dining room was not better furnished than the parlour; the walls were bare. There was a long table covered with a clean coarse cloth, and nothing encumbered it but a bottle of champagne opposite the hostess's plate, and a bottle of Don wine at each end of the table. About fifteen guests sat down to dinner. If I was surprised at the dinner service, my astonishment was still greater when the dinner was served; and I committed my observations to paper after the repast. Behind each person stood a servant, not dressed in the most splendid livery. The dinner commenced by slices of cold ham handed round in a dish; then a cold *pâté* of the livers of geese; then a salad consisting of craw fish, garnished with slices of beet root, and, lastly, some thin slices of Parmesan cheese.

Being myself fond of cold meats, I congratulated myself upon having made a good dinner, though I could have devoured more with pleasure; but as I saw the other guests help themselves but sparingly, I could but follow their example. I was about to ask for a third slice of bread, having consumed the two portions of white and brown which were placed before me, when I opened the eyes of astonishment upon the entry of the soup. Not knowing how to act, I watched the operations of the Countess, thinking that I could not do wrong if I followed her

example. I despatched a plate full of craw fish soup, than which I never tasted any thing more exquisite, and, seeing the hostess qualify it with a glass of wine, I filled my glass from a bottle near me; the doctor's place being, as I have before observed, at the end of the table. Whether she perceived any wryness in my face, as I gulped down the sour wine, I know not; but she ordered the man behind her chair to put beer and kvass upon the board, and immediately a bottle of each was placed before me. I partook of both during the repast, but they were not to my taste. I now found a large sirloin of beef at my left shoulder. The Countess had already helped herself very plentifully, but, after having tasted a mouthful or two, she sent her plate away, which she did with two thirds of the dishes. I found that a favourite servant enjoyed the privilege of eating off her mistress's plate, who was now employed in groping with her fork in a black earthenware jug, from the top of which a bladder had been partially removed, to pick out some stewed kidneys, which she consumed with a peculiar gusto. This dish was not handed round. Some buckwheat, boiled, and served up with cold butter in a saucer, followed the beef. I took the liberty of allowing this dish to pass, having indeed dined before the arrival of the soup: as I saw in what way the hostess treated her platefuls, I was easy upon this score. The next temptation presented itself in the shape of stewed carp, of which I partook, but they had the real muddy taste of the species; they were well dressed, and seemed to be approved. Had the

wine been better, it might have stimulated my stomach to a little longer warfare; as it was, I was quite *hors du combat,* and saw with pleasure what I supposed to be the last dish, in some chickens stuffed with parsley. I had often heard that eating and drinking to excess were very hard labour, and I seemed to be proving the truth of the adage; the chickens being handed to me, I summoned up courage and took a wing to play with; and on my plate being removed, I found a plum pudding at my elbow. Not venturing to attack this dish (the *mehlspeise* of the Germans), another was presented, consisting of fine asparagus covered with a sweet sauce. I had no alternative but to die of an apoplexy, or cease to eat altogether. I preferred the latter. I had now only to gaze and wonder at the capacity of the guests' stomachs, most of whom partook of every dish which was presented to them, and many asked me why I did not eat. The asparagus was succeeded by an immense joint of roast veal, served with salad, and the repast was terminated by a pile of cold craw fish, which were picked and eaten as a kind of *passe tempe.* Little conversation, or only monosyllabic dialogues, enlivened the meal: all seemed anxious to lay in a stock of the *vis vitæ* only, for, as Pindar (Peter) has said —

"Food is the bird-lime of the brain."

No sweet of any kind, save the few raisins in the *mehlspeise,* found place in the banquet. Colonial produce is not patronised by the Countess, who, like

one of the old school, thinks that every country sufficeth unto itself. The cloth was not removed, for the table was of common wood, and this does not set off a dessert to such advantage as polished mahogany. I counted fifteen different kinds of fruit upon the table, all the produce of the garden, which now became the theme of conversation; and, to do it justice, its credit was fully maintained by its fruits.

The flavour of the peaches, of the melons, of the pine-apples and grapes, was exquisite. A small basin of pounded sugar was handed to the Countess, who sprinkled a little over her melon, but sent away the basin, observing that the fruit was sugar itself. It is the custom in some parts of Poland for guests to bring their wine and colonial produce with them.

Looking around with a smile of great good-nature, the old lady arose; upon which many of the guests flocked round her and kissed her hand. We retired to the drawing room, and found our coffee poured out, and ready sweetened. After having sipped it, I was invited to go and survey the garden, of which I had heard so much before dinner; and the old Countess sat down to the quadrille table with three other ladies.

I sallied out to perambulate, and soon found that the commendations bestowed upon this hobby (the garden) were really due to it. Some fine bronze statues, cast after the models of antiquity, were scattered upon the lawn, immediately before the house. There were the dying gladiator, and the Medicean

Venus. Apollo and his train were appropriately arranged in the different walks.

The grounds were divided into two great divisions, viz., the pleasure grounds, and the fruit gardens. The former consisted of fish ponds, bridges over running streams, rustic cottages, dairies, arbours, interminable walks, serpentining in all directions, and graced with fine statuary, fountains, cascades, *jets d'eau*, beds of roses of all varieties, and parquets of flowers of all descriptions.

The woods, which bounded these, were of fine oak and beech, and stocked with game. The ponds were full of fish, and tame animals grazed upon the lawn. At the termination of the grounds flowed a fine river, upon the banks of which had been constructed an artificial ruin, in very good taste; and the superfluous water from the fish ponds, which were fed by a living stream, poured over one of the broken arches, into the river beneath.

In these grounds were several pavilions, each of two stories, and fitted up for particular visitors. One was destined to be occupied by the emperor alone, and no minor personage ever profaned this sanctuary by his unholy presence. This was furnished with great elegance. There was one tenement larger than the rest, which served as a banquet room upon great occasions, and contained some fine statuary.

The second division of the premises was appropriated to furnishing the table with all that art and nature could produce. Orchards, hot-houses, walls to train fruit, trees of all kinds, vegetables of all descriptions,

were to be found in abundance. This department was enlivened by a water mill. There was a spacious house occupied by the gardener, the Countess's right hand man.

Of the talents of the proprietor of these estates it may be affirmed, that there was nothing too great — nothing too small — for her masterly mind. She possessed a most speculative genius, and could equip a fleet, or an army, or gain a revenue of 15,000 rubles per annum, by levying upon her peasants a contribution of pigs' bristles!

She was profuse in many things, penurious in some. She would give away a million, and contract for the transport of its carriage (if in specie), upon the most economical terms, with the poorest of her peasants. Her faults have been much exaggerated, and, in spite of all that every body says to the contrary, I did not find her slaves in a worse condition than those of her neighbours.

Of her private character I can say but little, as I knew her only in her old age, and time softens every thing. Her manners were agreeable, her conversation amusing, her information good. She had many prejudices inseparable from a character placed in her circumstances. She was courted by all, and was a spoiled child, even at eighty years of age. She was treated by all who surrounded her as a sovereign princess; nay, it is said that the Emperor had been seen to kiss her hand. She was, however, neither haughty nor overbearing in her demeanour. To her children she was generous in the extreme; and it

must be remembered that she lived in a country where order and economy are looked upon as meanness, and where recklessness, profusion, and prodigality are the only titles to generosity.

There was something particularly attractive in these gardens, either from the continual variety produced by the arrangement of their parts, or perhaps from the surprise of finding such a creation in the midst of a barren waste. Day after day I loitered about the grounds, sometimes amusing myself with my gun or my fishing rod. It was often with regret that I was roused from a reverie by the ringing of the bell, which announced that it was time to prepare for dinner. It is just when we know that a sumptuous repast is at our command, that we envy those who can satisfy nature by consuming roots and herbs, and by drinking from the crystal spring; so, turning away from the bubbling fountains, I was ready to exclaim with Lucretius, "*Sedare sitim, fluvii fontesque vocabant.*" Upon the same principle, the rich and those who are quite at ease eulogise the charms of poverty.

As I was one evening sauntering in an alleé, at the extremity of which was an arbour, I observed a puff of smoke proceed from the spot. Why am I thus interrupted in my solitude? And straightway I hurried to the place from whence the smoke issued. When within a few paces, I was hailed by a well-known voice. It was that of the old Count. Before giving him time to speak, I upbraided him for having absconded so abruptly, without saying good bye.

"Good bye," he replied, "that is a pure English phrase. I never say good bye. How long have you been here?" he asked me.

Some weeks, I replied, but we leave again to-morrow.

"I am sorry for that," he continued, "for I shall be all alone here."

Wishing much to renew the thread of our discourse, which had been so very abruptly broken off, but not daring to do so from fear that he might have forgotten all that had passed, I waited for some opportunity; but he soon relieved me from my dilemma, by asking me how I liked the country. "You are now in Polish Russia."

The peasantry and the cattle seem much better fed than those in Gallicia. There is not that abject poverty which I deplored at Landcut, but the country seems much more productive, and the crops look well.

"Yes," he replied, and he laid by his pipe, and disentangled his arms from his Polish dress. "Yes, this was our richest province, but times are changed since Mazeppa was prince of the Ukraine."

And you, I replied, the proud Count Palatine.

"We have nothing to be proud of now, my friend." And the tear trickled down his furrowed cheek.

Were not these people once free? I asked him.

"Yes," he replied; "there are peasants on these estates whose fathers called themselves so; but we are now Russians; and Peter the Great riveted the chains of his serfs by his system of conscription for

his army, and Catherine made no distinction between her peasants."

I had now touched the right chord. Yes, I said, you have all the same privileges of slavery.

"What do you understand by this term?"

I hesitated.

"Slavery is a word but very ill defined," said the Count; "for, if you will, Europe has always been in a state of slavery, taking this word in its many significations. The degree of bondage has been different at various periods, as the rulers of the people or the masters of the slaves have differed in their own characters. As regards governments, after all, Tacitus has hit the mark precisely. So it was then, so it is now, and so it always will be. '*Nam cunctas nationes et urbes populus aut primores aut singuli regunt, delecta ex his et constituta Reip. forma laudari facilius quam evenire, vel si evenisset haud diuturna esse potest.*'

"It is precisely, therefore, as these administrators differ, that there is more or less of slavery, or, to speak more properly, that the yoke of slavery is more or less supportable; for there is much of imagination even in this respect. There is a species of personal liberty with which nothing can interfere, and which is consequently much the same in all countries. There is much difference in the quality, but the quantity of personal liberty is much the same in the aggregate. You see, for example, in this land of slavery, that the peasant is more free than the English labourer. You see these fellows (pointing to some

peasants riding upon the shafts of their carts, and sleeping in their waggons), not only on the high road, but even as they pass through the towns. You will see them do so even in St. Petersburgh. Now this would be punished in England by fine, or by the tread-mill. Were you to attempt to prevent these men from doing so, it would create more discontent than were you to put them into the shafts and make them draw the load.

" It is the same in greater concerns. The idea of the possession of liberty is the only thing which is essential to the happiness of the individual; for take an imperial ukase, and analyse it, and see how little difference exists between it and an act of parliament passed by a free people.

" The Emperor of Russia, either at his own suggestion or that of the council of the empire, decides upon reducing the interest of money one per cent., from a conviction that he is thereby promoting the good of the nation; for a monarch is not, in the present day, a wilful instigator of wholesale mischief. It is not, it never can be, the interest of any sovereign to act in such wise. Private feelings may be suddenly and rashly revenged, but a measure which is to influence the whole of society, and to operate upon sixty millions of people, must be good in intention, however badly it may eventually and from unforeseen causes operate.

" Now what would they have said in France or in England, if the king of either country had issued an *ordonnance* to reduce the interest of money? What

in fact did they not say when this measure was proposed? Was there not a universal cry against it; that it could not be done; that the chambers would never pass it? &c. And yet they did pass it; it was done, and nothing more was said about it. The difference, therefore, between the proposal of a measure, and the issuing of an ukase, in this particular instance, consisted merely in the privilege that the *proposal* permitted six months' useless discussion,—the ukase spared all such unnecessary trouble; and believe me, this is the great secret, for let people talk only, and they will believe themselves free! Where lies the difference between an ukase and a bill? 'Let it be done,' says the emperor, and it is done. 'Take the means necessary,' says the king to his premier. 'First, frame a bill; lay it before the commons; if it be likely to meet with much resistance, use all the influence the treasury can afford; turn all out of place who will not support it; promise their places to those who will, and by dint of bribery on the one hand, and spoliation on the other, you will get it through the commons.'

"'I fear not the lower house,' replies the minister, 'but we have the lords to contend with, and that house is independent.'

"'Oh, is it?' says his majesty, 'then it is time to change matters there. First prove its independence, however. Are there not among its members twenty-four translatable bishops, all dependent upon the crown? Did not I some time ago send one of them

with seven-league boots from Llandaff to Durham? As far as honour and emolument are concerned, are they not dependent? When the Catholic question became a government measure, their venality was pretty well proved. No, no, the bishops may be gained over! Then, see whose sons are waiting for promotion in the army or the navy. These fish readily bite, so that by a little tact you will get it through the lords; and after all, if the thing really comes to the push, my own prerogative, which admits of unlimited creation, will add as many peers as will be necessary.'

"Depend upon it," said the Count, "as things are now constituted, votes of taxes, of the suspension of the habeas corpus act, reduction of the interest of money, may all be accomplished in the way I mention, with infinitely more trouble, I allow, but as *surely* as by the issue of an imperial ukase; which, as you suppose, could only be tolerated by a nation of slaves. Whereas a bill is voted by both houses of parliament, sanctioned by the king's signature, costs ten times the time and ten times the money to get it through, and is consequently more in harmony with the institutions of a free people."

"You see, then," he continued, after taking six pinches of snuff, which he carried loose in his waistcoat pocket, "you see that this said liberty is not so real, or positive, as many suppose; and that an energetic king, or an able minister who possesses the royal confidence, can do a great deal by a circuitous route, and come to the same point as a *bonâ fide*

despot; and, after all is said upon the subject, we must eventually come to the conclusion of your poet, Pope —

'Whate'er is best administer'd, is best.'

The states of liberty and slavery have been much the same, at all periods of history. Both have required and ever will require definition. On the score of humanity, however, the world has much improved.

'Brooks' iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel,'

(the Count was ever quoting English poetry) were occurrences rare enough in the most barbarous times. Such things can never occur again."

I here interrupted the Count, by stating, that a few years ago, when I was in the Pyrenees, the Spaniards made an *auto da fe* of a Jew, and burnt him alive.

"And for what reason?" asked the Count.

Merely because he was a Jew, I replied.

He shrugged his shoulders, and said, "It is the last country in which such a thing could now occur, and it is the last time that it will occur, even there. Henry the Fourth, of France, the most humane monarch that ever wielded a sceptre, is said to have killed a peasant, whom he detected in the act of poaching — the same monarch who wished that every peasant 'had a fowl in his pot.' Lord ——'s game-keeper was killed last week, as I read in Galignani, by a spring gun which he had set for others. A Russian boor receives the knout; an English peasant

is sent to the tread-mill; there is but little difference in the facts, I think, as far as the culprits are concerned. What essential difference is there between a press gang and a conscription? between slavery in the plantations and slavery on the high seas? This is the age of cant, my friend; all is cant and methodism. If things are overset, it will be by this sickly sentimentality, which strikes at the root of all good government — of all order — of all liberty. Things will come round again," said the Count, after a moment's pause. This was a favourite phrase, and he always repeated it twice over.

"Taking the thing therefore as a whole, personal liberty, with the exception in favour of humanity, has been much the same in all the periods of modern civilisation, either under lords, or barons, or kings, or republics.

"This is not the case with political liberty. People have enjoyed more or less of this under different circumstances. In the times of the most despotic governments, there has often been allowed a deal of political liberty; for, secure as they supposed themselves in their despotism, such rulers have rather encouraged the effervescence of public feeling, producing, as they believed, but a momentarily uneasy sensation, under the shield of which, the obnoxious measure which gave rise to it has passed into a law. The writings of those who lived under the tyranny of Louis the Fourteenth are more bold and more free from restraint than the productions of modern French authors, when France is attempting a constitution.

The author of the '*Esprit de Lois*' would not have written so boldly in the present day, nor could Massillon have thundered his denunciations against the vices of the great with the same impunity under a constitutional as he did under a despotic prince. The reason is evident. The governments, secure in their power, had no idea then that any practical influence could spring from the toleration of such freedom of speech and of writing. They have discovered their mistake.

"Education has done too much, and too little, for the people. They have been left with as much as has acquainted them with their slavery, without enough to put them in the way of shaking it off by degrees. They have felt their degradation only since they have been told that they were degraded. They have been exhorted to shake off the yoke which never galled them. It has been only in the attempt to shake it off that they have felt its pressure. This has been a mischievous, an ill-advised step. It has arisen from a mistaken principle, and from a limited view of things. Nothing can be good, nothing permanent, which is not attained in politics by slow and almost imperceptible degrees.

"It was decided by the congress at Lybach, that every thing which came from the people was bad, and led to anarchy and confusion; and that what proceeded from high authority was alone serviceable to the state. Nothing can be more erroneous than such an idea, — nothing founded on less comprehensive principles; for neither is every thing wrong and prejudicial merely

because suggested by the people, nor is every thing good which comes recommended by authorities in power. For it is not merely because it comes from the people, but because it comes prematurely; because the soil is not prepared for the seed; because the labourer has not sufficiently worked the ground; it is not like

'The gentle dew from heaven;

(the Count smiled as he quoted;) it is the impetuosity of the torrent, or thunder-storm, which sweeps away all before them, making what was before fertile a barren waste. This is dangerous, this alone is dangerous, when coming from the people. Nor, on the other hand, is the act of a narrow-minded, illiberal, time-serving courtier, less dangerous to the state, than the suggestions of the mob; for this, also, will eventually lead to that anarchy which it proposes to prevent; it will be swept away by the very torrent which it tries to resist. The people are less blind to their own interests than they are supposed to be. They will seldom come to extremities, unless goaded beyond farther possibility of endurance. They are almost as clay in the hands of a potter; a truth, as Dr. Southey observed, which governments have still to learn. Give them good laws; lead them on; educate them by degrees; show them no more liberty — promise them no more — than is suited to their habits and purposes of life. Constitutions must be the work of ages, if they are to be permanent. They last but for a season if forced upon a people incapable of appreciating them.

"Is not this the actual state of Europe at present? Is not this the reason that there is less political liberty than at former periods, when the term was hardly understood? Wherever constitutions have been attempted, they have had but their hour of existence, and the people have endured evils from their action and reaction, to which they were before strangers. Let me instance Naples, Spain, and Portugal—of France I will say nothing, for she has no fixed government at present."

Nor likely to have one, I replied.

"There is a cause for every thing," continued the Count. "Things will come right again. Napoleon kept Europe in a state of warfare for twenty years. The people first put the shoulder to the wheel readily enough, but defeat, taxation, and all the horrors of war tired them out. There was nothing but ruin before them, ruin behind them, ruin on every side. It became indifferent to them who should rule them. They could not be in a worse condition; they had nothing left but their lives to sacrifice, and life is sweet. Hence they began to ask themselves—What are we fighting for? To drive an enemy from a country too poor to maintain him? To regain liberty which we have never possessed? Despair seized them. The good which they might lose was not good enough to warrant the sacrifice they were continually called upon to make. Some new stimulus, some compensating promise, was absolutely necessary to goad them still on to secure to their rulers their tottering thrones. The word constitution was pros-

tituted to this service. It acted as a charm; for all attach a magical power to this word. This acted, then, as a new and successful incentive. Again the people roused themselves; again they furnished supplies; again rushed into the fight and won it; drove the invaders from the land, and then awaited the promised reward, which never has been granted them. Indignant at such treatment; incensed at the idea of having wasted their fortunes to no purpose; to see those who once promised them every thing, nay, who bent the very knee to them, now mock at their credulity, and lay the iron hand more heavily upon their necks; — the people, I say, bursting with rage, determined to take by force what was refused to entreaty. They succeeded, for force must always gain the day; but their success was of little value. It was as the impetuous torrent, which sweeps all away, and leaves nothing to enjoy the calm which may follow. Their strength soon became their weakness; and they have relapsed into worse slavery than previously, because they have aroused suspicion; and, once having proved their strength, it is the object of their rulers to cripple it as much as possible.

"Yours is the only nation which has ever understood and acted upon the understanding of public good. Hence it is that your constitution is so perfect; and yet what an anomaly does it appear to those unacquainted with its workings, though nothing hitherto has been able to cope with it. But it is a constitution, and not a *charte*, and this accounts for it. There is nothing fixed in it; it is always

changing; every day produces a change; every session a reform: hence it is so durable. The permanent good operated depends upon these changes. Hence it will go down to posterity as powerful as it was upon its first creation. But it was not created: every clause has required years for its consummation.

"Now compare it with a *charte*. Take the first article of the French constitution: '*Tout le monde est égal devant la loi.*' Every day gives the lie to such an assertion. No, you have no phrases; nobody can say what your constitution means; it is incomprehensible to yourselves: but see how it works! Its strength consists in some of its apparently weakest points; but all has been perfected in the womb of time.

"So many interests are represented, that should the crown encroach upon one, it must favour another: hence a continual reaction. The king can take nothing from the lords, nor the lords from the commons, without a *quid pro quo*. A despotic minister has his day, and may do evil therein; but it cannot endure long. The public good must and will triumph, in spite of all opposition; and woe to him who dares wantonly oppose it! As long as your constitution is what it is, or allowing only of such changes as mature deliberation and time, the ripener of all things, shall bring about, so long will you be free and independent. Every man of enlightened understanding, of generous principles, of good education, and who wishes well to his country, is as much interested in seeing the present state of things maintained in England, as any

one of her inhabitants. It is true," said the Count, who saw me smile as he uttered these last words; "and so you will be convinced yourself — but I must explain.

"Rewards and punishments are the chief incentives to all human actions. It is the same with the mass as with individuals, for the whole is made up of parts. New nations have their promised land in view, and, like the Pilgrim in his Progress, they have to wade through their Slough of Despond before they arrive at the goal. England has ever been to us this land of promise. We look up towards it, and long to reach it.

"It is natural to ask, why so small a portion of the earth's surface should have played so great a part. 'The sea, the sea — our insular position,' you are ready to exclaim — 'and our conquering fleets.' These have had their share, it is true; but the real cause is to be sought elsewhere. This enormous power has been more ideal than real; but illusion has become reality. Believing herself all-powerful, and repeating it often to others, England has made them believe so too. This ascendency which she has gained has awakened the attention of Europe. Seeing that but little of this power is ascribable to physical causes, attention has naturally been directed to moral ones, and *sterling worth* — a term of your own creation — has become as current on the Continent as it is at home.

"How, then, has this moral ascendency been acquired? is the natural question. Your religion has done much for you. It is neither fanatical nor

intolerant. I am myself a Protestant in the fullest signification of the term, and it has always been my opinion that there can be *no real liberty where the Roman Catholic religion is the religion of the state.* You have a highly educated and respectable clergy, but the affairs of state are not controlled by any religious influence. The time may come when fanaticism may upset your finest institutions; and I consider your church to be one of these. The increase of sects, and the increasing schism, threaten imminent danger to that establishment; and those who no longer frequent it, for "*ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute,*" will, in the course of time, refuse to contribute to it. There is nothing I should regret so much as the fall of the Church of England. It is a liberal, a tolerant institution. I consider Methodism as the greatest proof of a low and vulgar mind. The English clergy are alone those who are generally admissible in society; and this constant admission is of infinite service to the morals of the middle classes. I know of no more respectable member of society, than a liberal-minded, well-educated English clergyman. In so numerous a body, there are Trullibers on the one hand, and preaching coxcombs on the other; but I have derived great pleasure from conversing with clergymen of the Church of England; and Chesterfield could not now make good his assertion, that, of all men who can read and write, 'parsons are the most ignorant.'

"If the church system is changed in England, it will have a bad influence upon the morals of the middle classes. Should the clergyman degenerate into

the priest, there will soon be no religion in England; or, what is worse, no morality. If you do not consider those appointed to instruct you in religious duties at least equal, if not superior, to yourselves in education, how can you have confidence in them, or listen to them with any hope of advantage? And if you do not see things in this light, then adieu to all sincerity in religious concerns. Believe me, I consider your church as one of the first pillars of the state; and should she fall, such another prop will not be found so readily to supply her place. Nor would I allow any great changes, and certainly no sudden ones, to be made in her constitution. The clergy are not sufficiently remunerated, it is true. A more equable distribution is necessary. Those who do all the work should, at all events, have the means of a comfortable existence. Equality in the church is not desirable. There must be a reward held out to the industrious, to the learned, to the zealous in the good cause. A man of talent may now rise in the church, as a lawyer may rise on the bench, or as a soldier may rise in rank. Promotion is the necessary stimulus to exertion in all the three classes; and, as all are composed of human kind, all require the temptation.

"I passed, as you know, many years of my life in the United States of America, and it appeared to me that the greatest defect in their constitution was the want of an established church. It serves as a rallying point, a strong hold on the mind, a bond of attachment and union, which a state ought to possess. It is, I believe, (in a great measure, at least,) from the

good of your established church,—diffusing, as it has done by its ministers, those wise and moderate precepts which have established the moral character of your middle classes, — that your country has gained this great ascendency over the other nations of Europe."

The Count, pausing for a few seconds, took up his long pipe, and having knocked the ashes out of the bowl, prepared to refill it. I was about to observe to him, that, much as I valued the truth of his observations, still I could not reconcile some inconsistencies in his discourse. The old man, finding that he had left his bag of tobacco in his rooms, put aside his pipe again, but took half a dozen pinches of snuff to make up for it.

"Inconsistencies!" he replied. "Why, there is no greater anomaly than your internal government. It is the most inexplicable part of your system. There are, apparently, no prescribed laws, nor orders, and yet every thing is in its place; but, what is more singular, you seem to have no *employés*, those consumers of the public wealth, and those spies upon the people, who abound in all other countries. You have no armed force, except your military, whom one hardly ever sees, and yet there is no need of such control in one of the most riotous, disorderly, and disaffected people in the world. If I walk from London to Greenwich, as soon as I am off the pavement I have a foot-path rolled out for me, and may go along with my eyes shut, except that I should risk running against the three posts stretched across the path, at certain places, for my convenience. They explain to

me that I am no intruder, but they tell the horseman that he is not to intrude upon me. Now it would require a sentinel at every hundred paces, to do in another country what is done in yours by common consent.

"Then as to that wonder of the world — London! Is it possible to believe, that a million and a half of people can be kept in order without an armed force? Whence does all this arise? From that spirit only of public good which pervades every class of society, and in which all are alike interested. There is not a man in the empire but hopes at some future period to better his condition; as your saying goes, 'We shall all be kings in our turns.' It is this spirit which does wonders with you. All your mob riots subside of themselves, with but very little interference from the authorities; and that which in other countries would end, if not checked at its commencement, in a bloody revolution, terminates without a blow in England. It is not that the power of the mob is not to be dreaded, for an English mob is brutal in the extreme, and, had it cause to make a stand against the authorities, it would soon sweep them away. But here again is the difference between an English and a French mob in arms. In the latter instance, the people rise to maintain their legal rights against those who are the first to violate the laws which they have themselves established. In the former, the violation of the laws commences with the people, and their own knowledge and self-conviction of this fact prevent the mass from acting long in

concert. There is no standard for them to rally round. They know that they have a right to meet; to discuss grievances; to present petitions. Nobody can interfere with these privileges. If they proceed to riotous conduct, then government may exercise its authority. But, even under such circumstances, the government is bound by certain laws, as coercive as those by which the people are controlled; for what an admirable, what a humane piece of legislation is the reading of the riot act, which grants a whole hour's time for them to return peaceably to their homes. Should this principle ever be violated, should a minister ever attempt a *coup d'état* in England, then the people would prove their power. Let the laws be violated by those who are bound to maintain them, and then no power on earth can resist the torrent. When the people have *right* as well as *might* on their side, England ceases at once to be what she now is. Do not judge by the issue of your Spa Fields or Manchester meetings. Those proceedings were riotous and illegal; but attempt a *coup d'état*, and the stones will rise up against you.

"As long as the public good is the object of those who govern, as much as of those who are governed, so long will the country continue to be powerful and great — happy in itself, and inspiring admiration and wonder among the nations of Europe. Many of these hate you: all are jealous of you, and yet try to imitate you. They all fail in the attempt, because they only see the results of the operation of your constitu-

tion: they do not study the composition of the machine itself.

"Poland once boasted of a constitution, and of a *habeas corpus* act, and all the people were slaves. Now, a constitution must operate equally for all classes, or it is a misnomer. This is the stumbling-block in the way of introducing such a system into Russia. The nobility would exclaim — 'What! deprive ourselves of what we possess, to make our peasants comfortable? No, we want a constitution for our class of society only. Let the peasant remain as he is; he is not fit for liberty. If free, he will neither work for himself nor his master.' Now the fact really is, that in England there is no real peasantry. The tiller of the ground is a hired servant. As he is more industrious, more intelligent, than his companions, so will he reap more fruits from his labour. He aspires to be something better than what he is, and he will rise to some higher situation if he persevere in earnest.

"It was a leading article in Napoleon's code — '*La carrière ouverte aux talens.*' It has been the essential ingredient in your constitution from time immemorial. Talent, in England, is governed by hydrostatic laws. It will find its level. There is no situation, however high, to which the lowest-born man may not aspire. There is none which he has not filled. The Lord Chancellor Eldon boasted that he had been educated at a charity school. I cannot, from unassisted memory, enumerate all the instances of high situations in the state having been filled by

men of low origin, yet they were so many at the time when the French marched into Spain with the Duke d'Angoulême at their head, that the French minister, alluding to the opposition made by the English ministry to the invasion, in enumerating the different members who then composed your cabinet, declared that it was '*une ministère tout-à-fait canaille.*' So much did he understand the nature of your constitution.

" Where no such advantages — where no hopes of promotion, nor amelioration of condition, are held out to the peasant, as in Russia, he sinks into a state of moral degradation, and is anxious to procure as much only as will support life. The Russian peasant is compelled to pay a certain sum yearly to his lord, and there is no fixed stipend; it is no contract between the parties; it is the lord's privilege to augment or diminish this tax at his pleasure. If he be in good hands, and serve an opulent master, his condition in life may be comfortable enough; but he is more frequently at the mercy of hard-hearted, grasping stewards and overseers, who may, unknown to their employer, render the existence of the peasant miserable.

" The system of taxation often bears so hard upon him, that he must sink under it. If he be industrious, and have accumulated a little means, his bettered condition escapes not the eye of his employers, and, considering that he is able to pay a heavier *abrok* (poll tax), a heavier one is laid upon him, so that he gains nothing by his industry: it is his master alone who benefits, and, this stimulus to exertion being

destroyed, he is careless about his state, and labours merely for food. In many instances, however, there is no opportunity of his bettering his condition. He is in the hands of a spendthrift and a gambler, who crushes him to the earth; his horse, his cow, his pig, nay, the fowl is taken from his roost. The labour which he is compelled to perform, and the manner of performing it, are most vexatious. In harvest time, the master's crops are first to be housed, and the peasants are transported from one estate to another, and at immense distances. When they return to their homes, to gather in their little crop, they find the over-ripe wheat shed upon the ground. Of this I have known instances. What advantage — what encouragement is held out to the peasant, if the most industrious lose the reward of their industry by the unfair extortion of their owners? The feelings of interest are no longer mutual between the parties, or they become so too soon — that of the master to grasp, that of the peasant to make that grasp as empty as possible. The peasant is a slave, and a slave has no right to possession. All that he can accumulate belongs to his master, who may sell him and his property."

How? I asked. I thought peasants could no longer be sold, except with the land upon which they lived.

"This law is evaded," replied the Count, "by letting them out to hire for any number of years, which comes much to the same thing as selling them.

"Now how is a constitution to be maintained in a

country where such things exist, and when the nobility will not permit the emancipation of the people, and the sovereign dare not emancipate them, or Catherine would have done it. I do not say that a constitution is practicable in Russia, nor will it be so for a century. In a word," said the Count, "until other nations can learn to understand the meaning of the word public good, it is useless to attempt constitutions. But this they have not the courage to understand. — But adieu for the present. We shall meet again in ——."

CHAP. XV.

UKRAINE. JEWISH OBSERVANCE OF SABBATH IN TOWN OF HUMAN. STROLLING PLAYERS. CELEBRATED GARDENS OF SOPHIUFKA. JOURNEY OVER STEPPES. RUSSIANS ADHERING TO ANCIENT FAITH OF CHURCH. BOGOPOEE. TALKATIVE FRENCH WOMAN. SEVERINOWKA. LOCUSTS. DEVASTATION COMMITTED BY THEM ON CORN FIELDS. ARRIVAL AT ODESSA.

THIS was the second and last halt which we intended to make on our route to Odessa, and we had tarried here a fortnight, enjoying all the advantages of summer, being protected in the domains of the old Countess from all its inconveniences.

The province of the Ukraine differs widely in the appearance of its stock from that of Gallicia. Both men and animals, as I have observed, wear a happier appearance, and, indeed, the country is much more productive. I was taking an evening ride with the steward of the estate, when, passing by a large piece of wheat, he asked me to look at it and tell him what I thought of the crop. I replied, that such a crop in England could not be called more than an average, or perhaps a scanty, light crop. The farming is, I continued, very slovenly, for the corn is choked with tares. He smiled, and informed me that not a grain of corn had been sown! The crop, such as it is, proceeds from the shedding of the over-ripe corn of last

harvest. I could hardly believe my eyes, had they not convinced me, by examining the ground, that it had not been ploughed. There was, as the steward informed me, much virgin earth on the estates which had never been cultivated. The grass grows to a great height, and the cattle profit by it, being large and sleek. The oxen are all of the same colour, a light iron grey: they have short horns.

Having seen all the lions of the country, we bargained with some Jews to take us to Odessa; and the scorching sun which fell upon our heads, and the dust which smothered us as soon as we had quitted the gates of the premises, reminded us of the exit from Eden.

The conversation of the old Count, as it still sounded in my ears, made me regret that I had been so little in his society, and I only comforted myself with the idea that perhaps we should soon meet again.

The shades of evening were fast spreading over the plain, and the twinkling of the distant lights announced to us that the Jewish Sabbath had commenced in the town of Human. In every Israelitish dwelling flickered the little farthing rushlight; and as we approached the synagogue, the busy hum of man informed us that prayers were being addressed to the Great Jehovah.

It was Friday evening, and the star had risen as we entered the town where we were fated to pass the following day; for in one respect the Jew maintains his privilege, in spite of the harsh means used by

some, or the kind persuasions offered by others: the Jew will not violate his Sabbath.

We had need of repose, for we had been exposed for some days to a scorching sun; and although black impending clouds, torn asunder by frequent flashes of lightning, threatened to deluge us with rain, still not a drop came down to refresh us. Three of our best horses died upon the road. We had halted at noon in the middle of a desert, but there happened to be a spring of water in the dry places, and the horses had probably been allowed to drink too much; for, soon after recommencing our journey, three of them were seized with the staggers, and, turning round and round involuntarily for some seconds, fell down dead upon the spot. Then Moses began to weep, and wail, and wring his hands, and dance about, and throw himself at our feet; nor would he quit this humble posture until he received the assurance that the loss of his horses should be made up to him over and above the original contract. This point gained, the sudden death of his beasts affected him less, for he was in reality a gainer by the loss.

Although it was late, we had not yet dined; so, having refreshed ourselves with a shave and ablutions, we sat down to table, and hardly had we commenced our repast, when we were interrupted by the entrance of Alexander the Great!

It was curious to see the conqueror of the world, dressed in his royal robes, throw himself in a supplicating posture, and taking the Count's hand impress upon it a kiss, and exclaim — "Panny — Panny."

A company of strolling players were performing to empty benches in a neighbouring barn, and the performance had actually commenced, when the manager was informed of the arrival of six carriages in the neighbourhood. The performance was stopped, and the manager, dressed in his theatrical robes, stepped over the way, and implored the Count to patronise the performance by his presence. The thing was soon arranged. The stage boxes were taken, and Alexander was requested to go and continue the performance, nor await our arrival. We laughed heartily at the adventure, and, when we had finished our repast, adjourned to the theatre, where we arrived in time to witness the triumphant entry into Babylon.

The following afternoon we devoted to seeing gardens even more celebrated than those of the old Countess, although upon a very inferior scale. They had to boast of the works of man, and of the triumph of art; whereas nature had done much for those of Alexandrine.

Situated at a small distance from the town, are the celebrated gardens of *Sophiufka*, named after the late Countess Sophia Potocki. They are not upon an extensive scale, but they excel in beauty any thing I have ever seen. Art is said sometimes, and particularly in these instances, to triumph over nature, but its greatest triumph is to imitate her.

Here, then, in a desert — in a sandy plain, without a tree or shrub to enliven the scene — arise as if by magic the gardens of *Sophiufka*. Entering by an ornamental gateway, we were first greeted with the

produce of Flora, in all the fanciful shapes which art can devise. The eye feasted upon the splendour of the rose and the lily, the sense of smell was gratified with their perfumes, and the ear was greeted with the modulated sound of falling waters. The whole gardens are surrounded by trees, chiefly poplars, which shut out all imaginary communication with the exterior.

Leaving the territories of Flora, we entered a meadow, the delicious green of whose carpet refreshed the eyes, wearied with the glare of the sun and the reflection from the sand. Here the birch, the poplar, and the willow, grown to full estate, wave their branches over a quick running stream, whose rapidity proves the impulse given it by its descent from higher level. Here, in this division, all seems the work of unmolested nature. The trees are not planted in rows, nor is the ground squared or triangled. It is a green meadow bespangled with the daisy and the cowslip: the brook runs impetuously along, and we watched its surface in hopes of seeing the trout rising to seize the flies which played upon it. In ascending the stream, the roar of waters became more audible; and emerging from the meadow we arrived at another flower garden, in the centre of which was a large pond, where the fish sported merrily, leaping up between the leaves of the wide-spreading lotus which covered its surface.

In this department were to be seen statues surrounded by roses; there were land and water divinities, and the willows waved over sepulchral urns.

Seats and benches at convenient distances around the pond allowed us to gaze at our ease upon the temple of falling water, which, situated upon the heights above, poured out its sheet of sparkling gems, leaping from step to step, interposed to break its fall, and at length terminating its dancing course in the pond beneath.

This temple forms the lion of the spot. It is *unique* of its kind, and worthy of imitation. "*Je suis étonné,*" observed the Count to me, "*que les Anglais, qui aiment tant à voyager pour voir tout ce qu'il y a de curieux, ne viennent pas ici.*" But let me introduce the reader into the temple as we entered it ourselves.

After quitting the statues and the sheet of water, we wound up a steep hill by a narrow path which allowed but one at a time to proceed along it. The thick brushwood prevented our seeing any thing out of the path, but we could hear the noise of the water close to us. "Stoop," said the guide, who preceded us, as he pointed to a little door, through which we were to enter, and having entered we stood upon a dry stone, with a sheet of water falling all around us, except at the point of the little gate through which we entered. The effect was most enchanting. There we stood, as it were, in a large glass lantern, a diving-bell above ground, and saw the water fall before us like thin muslin gauze. Here nature seemed to imitate art; for the appearance of the real water was precisely such as we see attempted in representing cascades upon the stage. The sheet of water was unbroken, and we saw the meadows and the gardens beneath, as

through a glass lantern, agitated by the wind. It was not a steady view. A continued rainbow assured us of our safety, though surrounded by living waters. It was a lovely scene, and loth were we to leave it. Embarking in a boat, all in darkness, not a thing to be seen, not the hand held up, the ladies shrieking, the boatmen cheering, we rowed along, and finally emerged upon the surface of an immense lake, which formed the reservoir of this cascade. All around was waste, and sand, and desolation, and the town of Human. We had made our exit from the happy valley.

These gardens were formed by the hands of the Count Potocki's peasants. By whom the plan was designed I know not, but the manual labour was the pride of the serfs, who once boasted of a regal master, and the remembrance of whose government brought tears into their eyes.

The waters do not play for more than eight hours at a time, when the reservoir requires to be refilled; but they can be made to play for eight hours daily out of the four and twenty.

And where is the proprietor of these gardens, which now perhaps are a mass of ruins, the prey and spoil of government satellites? Read the letter he wrote to his Emperor, when, even towards the close of the struggle, he abandoned his estates and entered Warsaw. "Let the youngest of the family wash out the —— spot which soils the name of Potocki." Such, or nearly so, were his words, and he left Human and his gardens, and entered the army and fought in the

last struggle which his country will ever make for independence; for nothing short of almighty influence can ever raise her again. An exile in a foreign land, he is still independent; and, following the example of the patriot Kosciusko, he prefers expatriation to remaining an unavenging spectator of his country's wrongs. He is now the noblest remains of that once powerful and opulent family: the son of him whose estates were bounded by four rivers, and who numbered his serfs by hundreds of thousands: the Count Felix Potocki, the lord of Tolchin, could vie with many potentates for extent of territory and number of souls. But to return to Human to dinner. How gross the thought, but how good the cheer, after a morning spent in fairy land!

To make up for the delay occasioned by the invincible pertinacity of the Jews in keeping their Sabbath, we started at one o'clock on the Sunday morning. It was a sultry night, and we thought that it would be less sultry than the day. Sir Andrew Agnew would lose two days a week were he to travel in Russia. His conscience would not allow him to travel on the christian, the Jew's conscience would prevent him from travelling on his own, Sabbath: he would have more time, it is true, to expound the Scriptures to his lady.

We travelled all night, and the next day, without meeting with any adventures, or any thing worthy of description, unless it be the quantity of storks, which increased in number as we proceeded towards the

south. Wherever we halted to change or rather bait our horses, provided that the resting-place comprised a house graced by a chimney, so surely upon that chimney top was there to be seen a stork's nest. The bird is quite domesticated in these wild steppes, and walks about unmolested, and as fearlessly as a turkey-cock in a farm-yard. He is the common scavenger; and luckless was the day to the frogs when they chose him for their king. By the side of every pond is he to be seen, picking up the croakers with as much *sang froid* as a fowl picks up a grain of wheat; and away he flies with his victim to the nest, where the young, impatient for their meal, are thrusting out their long necks and contending for the tit-bit. He is not over-choice in the delicacies with which he feeds his offspring. I have often seen him rise on wing with a large portion of a dead dog in his jaws; for storks are like Chinese in this respect — they have no prejudice against animals which have died a natural death.

We frequently saw a whole regiment of these birds standing together in the middle of a large inclosure, and I often tried to approach them with a gun, but not with any intent to shoot at them. They would not allow me to approach very near, but took wing and flew a few paces further off; yet the same birds, when near the houses, would allow of much closer contact. The peasants never molest them; and as they only feed upon that which is a nuisance, they are serviceable creatures.

After being scorched by a burning sun, and

smothered with dust, we halted for the night at a kind of inn, kept by a Russian belonging to a sect which is styled "the Ancient Faith." I am not sufficiently versed in the rites of the Greek church to be able to explain what are the innovations in their neighbours' creed, which they reject, but I understand that they are a small sect, reported to be more honest than their neighbours, and more cleanly. No better recommendations for inn-keepers can well be imagined. "They are like your Quakers," said the Count: "they are neat and cleanly in their persons and in their houses. They do not cheat, but they sell every thing dearer than other tradesmen."

As the first part of the phrase was all which concerned me at present, I went to bed upon this encomium, and dearly did I pay for my credulity. The room was clean, the walls white, the bed neat, and the linen looked comfortable. I undressed myself, and got between clean sheets. Hardly had I put out my light, when I was assailed by all the insects I had ever read of in the almanack: black beetles, spiders, centipedes, moths (with the death's head), and musquitoes, not to mention the crawling and jumping animals which came in swarms. Having supported matters as long as I could, I was compelled to leave my bed in spite of the cleanliness of the Old Faith, and, dressing myself, I returned to my calash, where I passed the rest of the night.

Our next halt was at Bogopole, where we lodged in the house of the steward. The town and estate

belonged to a cousin of the Count's. Here we had better accommodations for the night.

The Bog, which flows through the town, is a wide, but dirty, muddy stream. The banks are low and barren, and the few fish which live in the river are hardly eatable. It was in the month of July that we arrived at Bogopole, and so dried up was every thing around the town, that the only green thing to be seen was the painted cupola of the Greek church. The town was unlike all that we had hitherto seen under this denomination. It was not a whit worthier of the name, but there was here a transition link between Turkey and Russia, not discoverable in the inhabitants, but in the habitations. The former consisted of Jews and peasants: the town itself, with its low tenements covered by wooden roofs, with projecting gable ends, reminded me from a distance very much of the prints which I had seen of Turkish villages.

We had fallen short of sugar and lemons in our march, for we found lemonade the most refreshing drink, and consumed it in large quantities. Here we took in a fresh supply, and, crossing the Bog on a raft, continued our journey through the same kind of uninteresting country.

Halting at noon to refresh our horses, we were saluted by a female voice, giving utterance to French sounds, in the *personnage* who pumped up the water from the well. Soon, and without inquiry, were we instructed in the whole history of the woman, who, following the soldiers of Napoleon, had been left in the country, in its retreat from which an army of

more than half a million of souls could hardly muster a hundred thousand men.

How graphically has the fate of this army been told by our poet Sotheby! —

> "When day was slaughter, nights without repose,
> Save when bleak winds some famished legions froze,
> And horse and horseman fell without a blow,
> And armies vanished, sepulchred in snow."

Were these the reflections caused by the sight of a French servant girl giving water to horses panting for breath, covered with foam and stifled with dust, in a sandy desert in the dog days? Precisely such; for we feel most for others when we have nothing to suffer ourselves. It is compassion alone which we have for our own sufferings, and we do not refer to the poetical descriptions of others to illustrate our own feelings of misery. We may do so when they are no longer tormenting us, but surely not at the time itself.

When we had heard the whole history of the widow (as she styled herself) of the sous-officier, which did not finish until the horses had been sufficiently baited, we toddled on again at a slow pace.

It was about three o'clock, or perhaps a little later; and in the distance was a hill, the only elevation we had seen since we left Lemberg. I was riding upon the outside of the calash, reading a book, and as we rolled slowly along I perceived a large black cloud lying upon the top of the hill. I first thought it betokened a thunder-storm, a daily occurrence during

the whole of our journey. I was, however, struck with the motion of the cloud, which seemed to assume all shapes, lengthening and contracting, and throwing itself into various contortions. I knew not to what this could be attributable, but of course immediately referred it to the usual and unerring cause which accounts for all physical phenomena — *electricity*. As I was still gazing upon it, the calash suddenly stopped, and Count ——, who was in the van, beckoned me to him.

"Do you see that large black cloud in the distance, Doctor?"

I have been watching it for some time, I answered.

"Well, what do you think it is?"

It is not difficult to say what it is, but I am puzzling my brains to find out what causes it to make such evolutions; and as I spoke, it suddenly tapered into a long string.

"Now look at them," said the Count. "These are the locusts upon wing. I hardly ever saw such an army in the air."

Is it possible? I replied, half convinced that it was something more solid than air, which now took a different direction, and left the hill clear to the view.

"We shall hear what devastation they have done before we get to Odessa. Woe to him on whose fields they alight — not a green thing will remain."

We lost sight of them all at once, and proceeded on our journey.

"Well, we shall dine with my uncle," continued the Count, "and he will give us forty different kinds

of wine to drink, and thirty-nine of them will be detestable. He has been establishing a colony in the desert, and thinks that he can sit under his own fig-tree, and drink wine of his own pressing. You must praise all his wines, but for God's sake don't poison yourself with them."

We soon reached Severinowka, but the locusts were there before us. The host came out to meet us; a thin, spare, and feeble old man, polished in his manners, and affectionate in his greetings.

"Well, you are come to see me ruined," he exclaimed, "for this season. The locusts are in my garden, and in my fields, and my poor peasants will not have an ear of corn to put into their garners. They are all gone out to endeavour, by means of marrow-bones and cleavers, to drive them from the wheat; but it is all in vain. We have not enough hands to put to rout such an army. Come into the garden, and see how thick they cover the ground and the trees."

It is almost impossible to hope for credence from those who have not been eye-witnesses of the sight which the garden presented. The whole of the surface was covered, ankle deep, with these insects, clambering pellmell over each other, but all proceeding in the same direction. They did not allow us to tread upon them, but, on our approach, rose on wing with a whizzing noise, and, flying forwards over the heads of the main body, settled down again in the vanguard of the body of their army. This is the manner in which they alight from the wing:

the first rank pitches upon the ground, and the others do not follow the train, but precede it, alighting one before the other, so that the rearguard in flight is the vanguard when they are upon the field.

The sight of them upon the trees was most curious. The branches were bent to the ground by the incumbent weight, and the Italian poplars resembled weeping willows, from their lighter branches being reversed by the weight of the locusts. Several trees were already completely bared, for the insect destroys much more than it consumes. It gnaws the stem of the leaf, and not the body, so that the leaf drops upon the ground almost entire, its stalk only having been eaten.

When the insects are browsing upon the trees, they are not so easily scared away by the appearance of man as when merely settled upon the ground; they hold fast to their food, and the boughs must be shaken before they will leave their hold. This was indeed a curious and amusing experiment, for it was something like magic to see a tree throw its branches up into the air, as soon as the locusts were shaken off. Their instruments of destruction must be very tough, for many is the stalk of a large sunflower which I have seen gnawed through by these insects. They seem, indeed, to be particularly fond of the stalk of this flower, and, as several are employed upon it at the same time, it soon breaks where the part is weakened by their gnawing; and it is curious to see the insects rise suddenly in the air when put to flight by this unexpected accident.

The insect is too well known to require description. There are several kinds of them, and the smallest, with pink wings, are the most voracious. Their legs, though long, are not made for jumping as the grasshoppers, but they march, on the contrary, very slowly along, and seem to be under the command of a chieftain. When they fly, they do not generally rise very high in the air, but move with an up-and-down motion. They avoid coming in contact with mankind in their flight. I have actually been in clouds of them, without one having come near my face. Sometimes, from accident, or from injury, or from fatigue, a solitary one will drop down exhausted, just as we see the straggling sick of an army; but when in vigour, upon wing, they steer clear of human kind.

Volney has given an accurate description of these insects in his Travels in Syria, and mentioned several facts which I myself witnessed. He observes that they are accompanied in their flight by birds of the size of a thrush, which devour them and make continual war against them. These birds are cherished by the peasants in Syria, and so they are by the people in this country. I have watched them for hours, but must confess I never saw them make much havoc in the ranks of the enemy. Some few would drop maimed upon the ground, but I never saw more than twenty of these birds at a time, and what could twenty do against millions? I think the destructive power of the birds has been overrated. As Volney observes, the locusts are sometimes carried by the

wind towards the sea, and, being exhausted before they reach the opposite shore, fall dead into the deep, and are washed ashore by the tide, producing a foul infection. I have understood that this is also the case upon the borders of the Black Sea.

When they arrive in full force in a country which is at all populous, the inhabitants drive them away by making noises with marrow-bones and cleavers, &c. They also burn straw, or sedge, or whatever light fuel they may possess, to smoke them out. All these efforts go but a little way to accomplish their end, for the locusts, driven from one field, proceed to another; and wherever they appear, it may be truly said in the language of Scripture that "The land is *before them* as the Garden of Eden, and *behind them* a desolate wilderness."

It is more easy to destroy them in their yet imperfect state, or before they have wings. They walk along the ground in myriads before they can fly, and always proceed *en masse*, in one direction; their march is very slow, and they do not skip as grasshoppers do. The French word, *sauterelle*, is certainly a misnomer. In our route to Severinowka, we saw great quantities of them along the road-side, in a direct line of march. At this period it is possible to destroy great numbers by preceding them and cutting deep trenches across their path; they all walk into the trench, where they find lighted straw to receive and consume them. This is a common and most effectual way. Upon the same principle, a person in Odessa invented a kind of long iron

roller, which was to be dragged with horses at full pace over their marching armies. All the means, however, resorted to at present, are more plausible than effectual, and have only destroyed the hundreds, to see the millions vanquish.

Each female locust lays from eighty to a hundred eggs, safely deposited in the ground, to be as many soldiers hereafter; unless, as happens in some mild winters, they are destroyed before they arrive at any growth.* What frustrates the good intention of those who seek to destroy them in the larva state, is the migratory disposition of the insects. They come from afar off, from unpeopled countries, and strangers consume the food which has been with so much pains preserved from the natives. It is a singular circumstance in their history, but one which has been authenticated by experience, in Odessa at least, that these flights of locusts infest this country septennially; they come at the end of the seventh year; they remain seven successive years in the country; they then take their departure, and are not seen again for seven years, when they again return. I have found the same observation in some work upon Syria; but it would be curious to ascertain whether there is any coincidence in the time of their arrival and departure between the two countries.

It is asserted, that when they have devoured all that is green upon the earth, and are unable to procure more food, they are pushed by hunger to prey

* The eggs are said to rot if the season is too mild.

upon each other; the weak and the wounded thus feed the strong, as is the case with quadrupeds under similar pressure of want. The same cause which compels them to consume each other, has often compelled the inhabitants of Syria, in cases of famine, to consume them. They actually grind the dried bodies of the locusts, and knead them into a cake.

Hunger will break through stone walls, and locusts and human bones have been found preferable to starvation; and this may be understood by those who have felt what hunger is. But to eat locusts by choice, when corn, wine, and oil are in abundance, appears almost incredible. We must at least say that it is very bad taste. Yet I knew a nobleman, of high rank and consideration, who repaired to Syria, and dressed and lived as the natives. But he wished to imitate St. John in the wilderness, and amused himself by eating these insects and wild honey! A more disgusting mouthful cannot be well imagined than one of these long, horny, scaly insects, from whose mouth oozes, upon the least pressure, a viscid fluid of the colour of treacle.

We were conversing upon the history of locusts, and lamenting the ravages which they committed, when the steward was announced. He came to report upon the mischief they had done upon the estate. He informed us that the whole crop was destroyed, and that, for the distance of several versts, not a head of corn was to be found upon the stalk; every ear of it had been gnawed off by these destructive insects. "*Voilà donc mille guinées de perte*

pour cette année ci, et ce qui est encore pire c'est que le paysan n'aura rien à manger." "I am glad," continued the old Count, "that I am going to St. Petersburg this winter, for I should not like to see the misery which these poor people will have to endure." "*Excusez moi, chère cousine,*" turning to the Countess, "*il faut que je fasse ma méridienne ;*" and he retired to take his wonted nap.

CHAP. XVI.

POPULARITY OF GOVERNOR. IMPERIAL FAMILY. ENGLISH MUSICIAN. VICTORIES OVER TURKS. DRAMA. FÊTE GIVEN TO EMPRESS. COUNT WORONZOW TAKES COMMAND AT VARNA. ENGLISH IN ODESSA. WATER MELONS. CONQUESTS OF PASKEVITCH IN PERSIA. QUIT SERVICE OF PRINCE, AND PROCEED EN ROUTE TO PETERSBURG.

THE following day we arrived at our journey's end, and reached Odessa about two o'clock in the afternoon. Lodgings had already been provided for us, so that we had only to take possession of them. The weather was sultry, and the first imprudence which we committed was to drink freely of water cooled with snow: this produced a disagreeable effect, which we all felt for several days.

The town itself has been so fully described by one of my colleagues, that I shall not enter into a minute description, confining myself to what transpired *in* the town, rather than dilating upon brick and mortar. Suffice it to say, that what was not long since a barren desert, over which the Turkish stork marched its long legs with undisputed sway, in vain looking for a chimney-top upon which to construct its solitary nest, is now the third metropolis of Russia, a flourishing sea-port with a considerable export trade. Odessa rose into eminence under the auspices of the Duke of Richlieu, and it has arrived

at its present state of perfection under the government of Count Woronzow. It is a proof to the world of what may be done by perseverance in a good cause, in spite of all the temporary obstacles which require to be overcome. Every thing connected with the internal administration of its government bears the marks of a highly civilised directing mind; and it is certainly the only town in Russia in which one can for a moment feel the same degree of independence which one enjoys in other towns of Europe.

In this respect Russia seems to offer an anomaly, inasmuch as her civilisation recedes from the centre to the extremities, and it is upon her Asiatic limits that we find the most perfect organisation. We expect to be pillaged by hordes of Tartars, and we find our persons more secure than in Moscow or St. Petersburg. We are not subjected to that system of legal plunder which exists all over the empire; we are not the prey of those little rips in office who live upon fraudulent exactions: hence the governor is much less popular with a certain class than other governors, who are imitated by their satellites; but he has established a government upon the solid foundation of honour and justice, and woe to Odessa when he retires from his post!

I arrived at a most propitious period in the capital of the south, and it seemed indeed that my fortune was in my own power. It was during the time of the Turkish war, about two months before the fall of Varna. The court of St. Petersburg was at Odessa,

and I enjoyed, as I supposed, the greatest of all possible worldly honours. I was attached to the imperial suite, and had an interview with her Majesty. I had ample professional occupation, for I was the only English medical man at Odessa, excepting the Count's private physician, and, as invalids were returning continually from the army, I had a good run of practice.

There was a scarcity of bark in the town, and the diseases were almost all of an agueish character. I insisted upon the use of arsenic; but I could not persuade my patients that so deadly a poison could ever be employed innocuously, and I was obliged to give up the point.

The influx of military, together with the continued arrival of ships of war from the Turkish batteries, made the town very gay, and public places of amusement were well attended. The Italian opera was very good, and the Prima Donna was much above mediocrity. The theatre at Odessa was far superior to any thing which I afterwards saw in Russia; but only Italian operas were played, and by Italians only.

There are few genuine Russians in Odessa, and the town is to Russia what Marseilles is to France, a kind of omnium gatherum port: Turks, Jews, Italians, Greeks, Armenians, Poles, and Germans form the mass of the population. There are a few French, and fewer English, and the few do not seem to have taken deep root. It would indeed be difficult to do so in a soil which does not penetrate above six

inches to afford subsistence to vegetable life — hardly deep enough to plant potatoes, which foreigners consider to be the food of the English.

Here we again met with the English musician, and as he lodged in our immediate neighbourhood, I had frequent opportunities of seeing him. I had ill-judged him in my first interview, for I found his manners so repulsive that I had little inclination to cultivate his acquaintance. I now had time to correct my error, and to make a friend of a travelling companion. I never met with a man of such honour, honesty, and high principle, who did so much injury to himself by the abruptness of his manners at first interview. This was the opinion of all who knew him in Odessa, *quel brave homme mais quel originel.* All the asperities of his manners wore away by degrees, and the ore shone bright beneath. He was persuaded to give a concert, and this time he succeeded to his heart's content. The Empress herself was present. It went off with great eclat. The emoluments amounted but to a modicum, and in this respect he was disappointed; for, like myself, he had been led to believe that professional men could not fail to make their fortunes rapidly in Russia; but if such things have happened, the times had passed before the musician and myself had tried the experiment. The pagoda tree had been plucked of its fruit — nay, the branches even well shaken.

He, like myself, had been deceived by the profuseness and liberality of the Russian and Polish nobility abroad, expecting to find them maintain the

same character in their own country. This was our fault, and not theirs. After all, perhaps, we have had our deserts, for what right have Englishmen to suppose that they shall be rewarded in foreign lands so much above what their merits entitle them to at home? as one of my colleagues has expressed himself, "*Soyons de bonne foi.*" Should I ever again meet with my musical friend, I shall be inclined to say with Cassius,

> "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves."

During the whole of our sojourn in Odessa, we were daily gratified by the victories of the Russians over the Turks, as announced by the parading of flags and banners, preceded by troops of little urchins, some of whom were paid, others started with a rope's end, to kick up this row.

It appeared, upon close investigation, that these flags were taken from the Turkish militia, and from the different villages through which the troops passed, for the Turks are as fond of flags as the Chinese; but they were not won by hard fighting. At first the inhabitants of Odessa joined in the shout, but when they found that this was a daily ceremony, and when no news arrived of the taking of Varna, they began to get tired, and the police enlisted a set of young urchins into its service, and when others ran out to ascertain what was the nature of the clamour, they were made to follow the cavalcade, and often much against their inclinations, for I have seen them

seek refuge in the court-yards and out-houses, from which a cossack has again cleared them with his thong.

A decided conquest, however, viz. the surrender of Anapa, produced more unequivocal demonstrations of joy. The ships in the offing fired a salute, and one of them spread out a sail, riddled with shots like a sieve by the fire from the Turkish batteries. There could be no mistake here, for *Te Deum* was chanted in the cathedral. I attended the ceremony, and was much pleased with the music. The men in Russia are more musical than the women; the tone of their voice is decidedly more melodious; and the church music is extremely beautiful. I was struck, however, with the length of the prayers offered up for the imperial family, for it is the custom to pray for the whole generation of them, cousin-germans and all, so much so that upon mentioning it to the Count he smiled, and observed, "*Oui, mon chèr, dans les églises Russes, on parle un peu du bon Dieu et beaucoup de la famille imperialle.*" Some of the priests (or, as they are called by the vulgar, popes) are fine, good-looking men. In the summer time they are seen walking about the streets with a long gold-headed cane; they wear a loose silk robe and a broad brimmed hat; and this, with the length of their well-dressed beards, gives them a primitive and patriarchal appearance. Like their lay brethren, they differ vastly, in their physical and moral relations, from each other. Some are respectable, benevolent men; others are a disgrace not only to their calling but to their race, and so given to drinking to excess, that I have known them pawn

the gold cross which they wore round their necks for a bottle of rum, when their purses have been exhausted.

The best of them are ignorant in the extreme, being content to believe with the Mahometans that there is but one book worthy of study, which is open to all; so that, like the patriarch of Goldsmith, Ephraim Jenkinson, "they are rather devout than learned."

The ceremony of blessing the waters was performed during my stay: it requires no particular description — a procession of priests, singing and chanting, *et voila tout!* It was more curious to see the old women and many of the children running down to the shore with empty bottles in their hands, ready to dip them as soon as the water had been blessed. This holy water is kept in the chamber, and used but sparingly in cases of illness, and many are the cures which it performs. It is efficacious in bowel complaints; and as these, in children, often resist other means, lucky are we if we can procure a bottle of this water to administer to them.

A circumstance occurred not long before I arrived at Odessa, which illustrates pretty clearly the influence of religion (such as is taught there) upon the minds of the people. A horrid crime had been perpetrated in the day-time; a man and his wife, who possessed some considerable property, had been murdered. The police got scent of it immediately, and a few hours afterwards laid hold of the murderers; and where did they find them? In the middle of the fields dividing the spoil? In some den or cavern secluded from

public haunts? In some obscure refuge in a distant part of the town? No, no!—in the cathedral church, kneeling at the altar. Here were they seized. In the house of God himself—in the sanctuary of the Most High—were the miscreants offering up their petitions that they might not be found out!

It is time to change the subject. Let us go to the theatre.

Foreign theatres possess a great advantage in permitting no gods in the galleries; hence there is none of the noise, row, or disturbance which drives an amateur of music wild in an English play-house. All is order and decorum, but still an Englishman does not feel free in a Russian theatre. In the first place, you must give in your name at the pit door before you take out your ticket, to be registered in a book. This was the custom at Odessa, at least when I was there. As soon as you enter the house, should you forget to take off your hat, you are reminded of your neglect by a servant in court livery, who gives you a jog, and points above to the spread eagle of Russia. Then you must sit down in one spot during the whole of the time; you cannot go in and out, nor loll against the boxes. It seems that pleasure is a command, and that you are a voluntary slave. Then there is no hissing permitted; silent contempt is the only mark of disapprobation; but for applause, oh! you may "roar till the Duke shall say, let him roar again."

Russia is far behind all civilised nations in the dramatic art. She has neither plays to perform, nor

actors to perform them; the second being naturally a consequence of the first. Yet she is not without a theatre, and scenic representations are popular in Russia. It is difficult to find a name for that class of society to which educated actors belong. They must be classed, I believe, with what the French generally denominate *artiste;*—a comprehensive word, which includes a very numerous body, for players, cooks, conjurors, and painters are all *artistes* in France. I know not if the word exists in Russia, but assuredly an actor has in this country a most indefinable rank. Nobility and gentry, the latter term very ill defined, form what may be considered educated society. The merchant with a beard has no claims to education. The greater body of those who form the middle class in England are foreigners naturalised, or permitted to remain in the country by paying a tax as foreign guests. Of these two thirds are Germans.

The higher class patronise nothing which is national; every thing must be foreign, to be acceptable in their sight. As to a tragedy in the Russian language, played by Russians, it would be barbarous to mention it. It follows naturally, that as a class of men do not meet sufficient patronage to study the drama as it is studied in other countries, so the only devotees to this art are to be found among a class of society of whom nobody knows any thing.

I was particular in inquiring what class of people were found on the Russian boards. The nobility and gentry can furnish none. The bearded *kupetz* would cross himself and cry "*Boje moia,*" to think of any

of his kith or kin so damning his soul to perdition; for an actor is *hors de l'église* in the Greek as in the Catholic faith. It remains then to search among the boors, and still unsuccessfully, for the sock and buskin.

In this dilemma I was referred to a certain and all-sufficient source, the foundling hospital. It is from hence that the major part of actors and actresses are furnished, and educated at the expense of government for this purpose. In every attempt to move out of their sphere they are unsuccessful. Their best tragedian plays Hamlet, and Lear, and Othello (for all the best tragedies are translated, and frequently played), but he has not the slightest conception of these characters. He can rant and rave, and suit the action to the word, and the word to the action; but they are both his own, and not the author's. He has no means of imitating the gentleman; his every movement, his every gesture, his mode of speaking, all denote the unschooled mind, and the man untrained to genteel society.

I saw Karatigin in the "Thirty Years, or the Life of a Gamester." He was reported to be inimitable in this piece, and particularly in the last act. The scene opens with a room in which he is gambling, seated at a long table with many others dressed, like himself, in gold and silver lace. He starts up, leaves the table, and tearing the cards to pieces, throws them upon the stage. The whole resembles more a valet in the antechamber, who, hearing the bell ring, runs away half frighted with a pack of dirty cards, with

which he and his fellow-servants have been amusing themselves for as many pence as their masters have been ruining themselves for thousands, and fearing he may be seen with the cards in his hand, unwittingly throws them upon the ground upon hearing the bell ring a second time! His dress facilitated the supposition; for he had on a long velvet green coat with bars of lace across the breast, a powdered wig, and black small clothes, with white stockings. Nothing is so preposterous as the dresses on the Russian stage: they are *outré* beyond all belief.

In one of the operas translated from "Father and Daughter," the late Dr. Willis is introduced to the deranged father by the governor of Bedlam, Mr. Seymour. This gentleman wears a blue velvet frock coat, covered with spangles; a black velvet hat, with diamond in front; white pantaloons; and a sword by his side. Such is Mr. Seymour, governor, or, as they in fact mean to say, keeper of Bedlam. But poor Dr. Willis — how is he caricatured! He comes to feel his patient's pulse, with a sword by his side, a black velvet hat with three ostrich feathers in front on his head, his upper lip and chin bearing black mustachios, a black velvet Spanish mantle, white satin sleeves with ruffles, white kid gloves, and the lower half of his body the same as Mr. Keeper Seymour.

So much for Russian taste as to dress. But to return to Karatigin, the Russian Roscius, who appears in the second act in the Paris ball-room. He is dressed in plain black, but he makes love like a *per-*

ruquier; there is neither grace, nor dignity, nor common *convenance* in his style; and towards the end of the act, where he makes his wife sign away the rest of her property, his manners are those of a butcher. There is not one touch of the English Beverley in all his acting, and the coarseness is sufficient to counteract the excitement of any feeling in the audience.

The last act is the *chef d'œuvre.* He is here the wandering beggar, with staff in hand, and satchel on back, praying for bread as he goes along. If he has merit, it is that he acts this part much more naturally, because he acts it as a beggar; his language, his movements, his personification of the whole is more perfect, because it is more natural to him. He is in no fault here; the author alone is to blame, or he has misconceived his meaning. He is not the man of fashion which he failed in personifying before. He now succeeds in representing a man pushed by distress to commit any crime worthy of a highwayman.

Such is a fair statement of my own impressions when I saw the piece performed. I consider the actor mistook the character throughout.

As to female tragedians, there is no illustration of the word. How is a woman, bred and reared in a foundling hospital, to move in higher spheres? and as all good acting is the imitation of life itself, so closely as no longer to seem an imitation, how can this be acquired under such circumstances?

The Russians excel more in their operas, though I

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know not if they have any which can be called original. They translate, however, very readily; and as the language is soft and melodious, and they have many good singers, so they succeed very well in this department of the drama.

The famous Der Freyschutz is as well played in Russia as in most parts of Germany. Their forte, however, is the national comic, and in this they excel. When they attempt to portray the manners and habits of the lower orders, their peculiar gestures and tricks are perfectly natural; they no longer play; they forget themselves, and imitation passes into reality. Here their musical talent is also of service in keeping up the illusion. The famous Troika, which had such a run in England, is the song of the peasantry. It is usual for the soldiers to assemble in groups of an evening in the villages, and sing for hours together, and their voices are melodious and harmonious; but, with the exception of the peasant girls who dance and sing of a Sunday evening in summer, female voices are rarely heard, and they are less melodious than those of the men.

The Russians finding that the grapes were sour which grew upon the walls of Shumla, abandoned the siege, and concentrated their forces upon Varna. The walls of the fortress and the courage of the besieged kept pace too well with each other, and resisted all the ordinary attempts which Prince Menchikoff had been for a long time making upon them. At length a cannon ball passing through his legs,

grazed the inner muscles of one thigh, and disabled him from continuing the siege *in propriâ personâ.* Varna held out, and the Emperor and his suite returned to Odessa, to await the arrival of the guards from St. Petersburg.

The troops of the line had been mowed down like barley before the walls of Varna. The Turks, encouraged by the discouragement of the besiegers, attempted a new plan of attack, and made sallies in the night, to the utter astonishment of the Father of all the Russians. In one of these sorties, six pieces of Russian artillery quietly slided into Varna, quite of their own accord (*se sont glissés*), as the bulletin informed us, and General Wrede was unfortunately put *hors du combat.*

The men, in want of every thing, died by hundreds, and nothing but the arrival of the guards could make any impression upon Yussoof Pacha.

In the meantime Odessa was all alive, from the influx of military and civil officers attendant upon his majesty; and *fêtes* and rejoicings of every kind assured the emperor, that as the sun does not set in his dominions, so does his presence infuse equal joy and happiness in his subjects on the banks of the Black Sea as on the Gulf of Finland.

Among the amusements instituted to please the court was a tea party, given by the Count Woronzow in his garden, which lay upon the sea-side, about three miles from the town.

The neighbourhood of Odessa is a broken coast, abounding in ravines, and in these are formed gardens

and small wooden buildings, which are called *hootas*. They are principally occupied by children and their nurses during the summer heats. The governor-general having a right to the lion's share (and a good right too, for the town of Odessa is almost of his own creation), has a long slip of garden lying in a ravine, sheltered behind by high rocks, and open to the sea, which forms little inlets all along the rugged and rocky coast.

The *fête* was given in this garden to the Empress and the court, and all the *comme il faut* society of Odessa were invited to partake of it, and a pretty sight it was. No one understands how to do the honours of a *fête* better than the Countess Woronzow, and certainly nothing could excel the manner in which she conducted herself upon this occasion. A *fête champêtre* might in itself plead guilty to some unexpected omissions; but no! all was in order; abundance of every thing, and no lack of mirth and jovialty. In Russia, however, every thing which is not absolutely military is decidedly theatrical; and so it was upon the present occasion. There is no fun where there is much form.

The Empress and her suite arrived about eight o'clock at the extremity of the garden farthest from the habitation. Here was a triumphal arch erected, and covered with green. As her imperial majesty passed, the young Countess Woronzow, a sweet girl of ten years of age, presented her with the *guirlande*. Some Tyrolean singers struck up at the same time. Her majesty was most gracious in her demeanour,

and being dressed in simple white, was, "thus unadorned, adorned the most."

At every hundred paces some new surprise was contrived to meet the imperial eye; but at length it came to the spot where, in the person of the prima donna, Tancredi was to jump upon the shore and sing the famous air of Patria. This was a failure, and an unhappy occurrence too. She had been waiting some time in a small boat, which was moored in one of the coves of the shore; but as it was rather a boisterous evening, the boat rolled about, and poor Tancredi was sea-sick. She was so exhausted by fatigue before the arrival of the Empress, that when she leaped on shore she fell upon the ground. This was mistaken for a compliment to her majesty, who went up to her and raised her with her hand. She endeavoured to resume her character, and tried to sing the air, but "oh patria" stuck in her throat, and Tancredi and Maroconi parted company.

By the time the Empress had arrived at the house fitted up for her reception, it was already supper time, and she took her seat at table, with the old Countess Branizka on her right and the Countess Litta on her left hand. The meal was served frugally, but a band of music had been prepared to make up for all defects of the *maître d'hôtel.* In this figured no less a personage than our friend the musician, who having arrived at Odessa had been already introduced at court, and led the orchestra to "God save the King." This was struck up as soon as a rocket from the frigate lying in the offing had announced that her majesty was at

supper. *Vive l'Empereur* was then given with great glee, and soon afterwards the party separated.

Each day resembled its predecessor in the endeavours to kill time, and the summer began to be on the wane. Still we had excursions on the water, and the last of these was a memorable one. We had embarked in a boat to visit a large ship lately arrived from Sevastopole. The party was composed of several ladies, among whom were the Countess Woronzow and her suite; and we were rowing fast towards the vessel, when we encountered her launch, which was rowing to the shore, steered by one of the most vulgar, insolent, and tyrannical beings that Odessa boasted of, viz. Capt. ——, an American, and at that time captain of the port. As soon as he came within hail, he vociferated, "Madame Woronzow, I do not think you will go on board this evening. I have despatches for the Count;" and saying no more, he rowed off. A sudden panic seized upon us all, for we thought that no less than the plague had broken out. All was conjecture, confusion, and amazement. All were agreed, however, that —— was a brute to have spoken thus.

We retraced our steps, and soon landed again, and all dispersed each to his home. I repaired to the governor's to know the cause of all this, and there I found all in confusion—servants, aide-de-camps, clerks, all busy about something. The cause was soon evident; the Emperor had ordered the Count to proceed to Varna, and carry on the siege. Thank God! said I to myself, the Turks will soon be beaten, but they will not be butchered if Count Woronzow is their conqueror. After some sighs and tears, the Count em-

barked on board the Standard frigate, leaving his friends by no means disconsolate, for all were sure of the success of his undertaking.

I was myself nearly kidnapped into the concern; for I accompanied him to the frigate, and was walking upon deck and busied about something, when I heard a noise over the side, and lo and behold the boat in which I had come was rowing off! She was luckily in hail; for hardly had I got into her again when all sails were hoisted, and the Standard had weighed anchor, a favourable breeze having sprung up at that moment. I might have gone to Varna, *malgré moi*, and I might have then written an account of the siege. I might have headed the next chapter, "*De ce qui se passait à la siege de Varna;*" and surely a doctor may give an account of a siege as well as a poet; and as Racine informs us *de ce qui se passait à la siege de Namur*, so might I have chronicled the feats of Varna: and so I might still, indeed, could I consent to relate any thing in these memoirs which I have not seen and done myself.

"Mais rien n'est beau que le vrai, le vrai seul est aimable."

The general governor absent, his duties devolved upon the civil governor, a man very respectable in his way, who, when dressed in uniform, with sword by his side and cocked hat on head, looked any thing but military.

Still, as I observed the summer was on the wane, I began to feel that I was not in winter-quarters. I looked round me, and saw slight provision against the winter's cold in the fuel which was to be picked up

at Odessa. Some few sticks were to be found in the courtyards of the opulent, but no coal nor piles of wood, such as I had seen in other places. It is true, that in the outskirts of the town I had observed piles of cow-dung, which I found served as fuel, and was sold at a high price. It is used even to heat the ovens; and this solves the difficulty of the command in Ezekiel, about which scoffers and infidels have shown their ignorance so glaringly. Men may be as great bigots in scepticism as in credulity, and true wisdom is as widely separated from the one as from the other.

Wishing, however, to eat my winter's bread baked by a more tempting fuel, and finding that I had nothing more to do at Odessa, I began to look out for a travelling companion, and I soon found one in a fellow-countryman, who was precisely upon the same look-out. We soon made acquaintance, and consented to travel together to St. Petersburg. All necessary arrangements being made, and finding upon counting up my cash that I had made a tolerable campaign of it, and a more successful one than I should perhaps have made at Varna, I determined therewith to be content.

I had a painful duty to perform, and one that cost me many a bitter pang. I had to separate myself from all that was kind and dear to me; to take leave of those with whom I had passed several of the happiest years of my existence, to whom I was in reality sincerely attached, and to whom I owed so much. I was to commence also a new career of existence — to quit private and launch out into public

practice. The prospect was good, it is true; but there was something appalling in the consideration. Still I was young; the world was all before me, and I was ready to try new experiments—I was not happy, and I might be happier, and God knows what might not happen. I felt so forcibly that

"Man never is, but always to be, blest,"

that, the pain of taking leave and parting once over, I was light again of heart, and eager for my departure. I dined with some English friends from whom I had experienced great civilities during the whole of my stay. I hardly know why I should think this worthy of insertion now, unless it be to second the words of the old patriarchal father of the family to me, who replied continually to all my assertions as to the promises I had received—"You can't trust them, Doctor," shaking his head at the time, and hitching up his *haut-de-chausses*. I was a little angry with him; for when mentioning that the people who made me the promises were men high in rank, high in the service, princes and counts, he made a horrible grimace, and swore that they were not to be trusted for ten rubles. Enraged at this, I pulled a long purse out of my pocket full of ducats, and, spreading them upon the table, asked him if I could trust that. The old man was a little confounded, it is true, but nothing daunted. He replied, "Put them in your pocket, Doctor; you will never get any more from those who gave you these. You are placed under happy circumstances at present; smiled upon, and in

the suite of the court. It would be impolitic to pay you ill now; but when they get you at ——, you will remember what I have said. Come, take a glass of wine, Doctor. I declare it drinks like claret after the melons," pouring out some miserable Odessa wine.

You are a disappointed man, thought I to myself; and having been taken in by those whom you yourself attempted to take in, revile the whole race. I have to do with another class of men, with the nobility, with men of education: you have been swindled, perhaps, by bearded merchants.

He wished us a pleasant journey as we left his house, and proceeded to the barrier, which, *moyennant* a glass or two of brandy, we passed without much difficulty; for Odessa being a free town, all that passes out of the barrier is subjected to the same custom-house control as if coming from a foreign country. We shall see, thought I to myself, old curmudgeon, as we shook hands and said adieu.

In God is every thing, says the sage, and his providence is manifest in the desert and in the dry places; for in the sands which surround Odessa, where the pilgrim may in vain look for a drop of water to quench his thirst, grows in all its luxuriance the water melon. Here, where no moisture is to be found, springs up a fruit which yields abundance of fluid to slake the thirst of the traveller. It is incredible to what size these melons grow, and how very prolific they are. As they grow in the sandy desert (not, however, wild, for the seed is sown by man), their broad surface offers a resting-place to the weary

pilgrim, who, seated upon one melon, quenches his thirst with another of smaller dimensions, which he holds in his hands. When eaten in this way they are a luxurious fruit; but not when taken in dessert after dinner, when nature has been already more than satisfied. It is to the thirsty man at noon that the water melon is a blessing; not to the pampered alderman after the feast is well nigh over.

So plentiful does this fruit grow in the neighbourhood of Odessa, that they are collected together in the market-place, and piled up in heaps like cannon balls in an arsenal. I have known them sold at a ruble the waggon load; but not an English waggon, for allowances must be made in all things for the difference of all things in all countries. Now, such a waggon as draws the coals out of the Adelphi wharf would contain six such waggons as I am here speaking of; but it is the waggon of the country drawn by two oxen, and may hold a hundred of these melons.

The traveller has an advantage over the non-locomotive man, inasmuch as he often arrives at a knowledge of the relative value of things, and reduces all that he may hereafter read of to its sterling value. When he hears of a general having taken a fortress with many pieces of cannon, of having taken many waggon-loads of corn, and many head of cattle, he will immediately divide the whole mass by twenty-five to reduce it to its sterling value; and here often he will be in the wrong, particularly as regards taking Asiatic fortresses, which are for the most part built

of mud walls, defended by cannon incapable of being fired off. Since the bloody siege of Ismael, and the bloody-minded bulletin of Suwarrow, the Russians have had little difficulty in taking fortresses. It is when they get the Turks into the field that they find what unchristian dogs they are. It is true that Varna belies this assertion; but I am alluding to the wonderful exploits of Paskewitch on the Persian frontiers, the hero of mud walls and broken howitzers. "*Il a pris une fortresse, mon chèr ami, avec* 120 *piéces de canon,*" said the old Countess to me, holding up her hands in ecstasy at this great and mighty victory. I bowed in admiration, for it would have been better for me to have contradicted the Emperor himself than to have doubted the exploits of the Marshal to the idolizing old Countess. She was reminded again of her darling Potemkin, and his darling orders—

"You must take Ismael, at whatever price;"

and she gloried in the idea that the Russian generals had not degenerated. It is true that Paskewitch accomplished great things, and made a brilliant campaign in the East; but he was alone, and fought his battles when and how he pleased,—a mighty advantage to a good general. Still he had not to contend with European forces; and Paskewitch might sing much smaller between Tilsit and Berlin, than between Anapa and Erivan.

CHAP. XVII.

TRAVELLING COMPANION. COBLEVOY. CI-DEVANT COMMANDANT OF ODESSA. CHASTISEMENT OF PEASANT. NO MEANS OF PROCURING HORSES. SPEED OF POSTING IN RUSSIA. ARRIVE AT NIKOLAIEFF. ADMIRAL GREIG. SIX MILLIONS OF CROWN OFFICERS IN RUSSIA. PODOLIA. TURKISH PRISONERS. ALEXANDRINE. KIEV. MEETINGS OF NOBILITY. CONTRACT OF KIEV. DIVORCE IN POLAND. LITTLE RUSSIA. COUNT ROMANZOFF'S ESTATES. ENGLISH STEWARD. SINGULAR METHOD OF DETECTING THEFT. AGUE. AVERAGE OF PEASANT'S LIFE. INSTINCT OF NEW-BORN CHILDREN IN CRADLE TO GET NOURISHMENT.

THE day was cold and dreary — a sharp north-easter pierced us through and through, half protected as we were from its influence in an old and uncomfortable calash, rolling along the sandy shores, and skirting the borders of the Black Sea. The sand rippled along in waves, forming little ridges; the whole shore was in motion, and looked like a soft tide gently flowing up; but the waves were of sand, not of water.

We experienced one of those sudden atmospherical changes not uncommon in these latitudes of Russia; changes which puzzle philosophers to account for their causes, and doctors to find the means of obviating their effects. These are changes which sweep away the old and infirm, and slaughter children wholesale.

My companion was of that species, however, which allowed of little scope for philosophical reflection: he

was a little man, with sharp features, an aquiline nose, light hair, which stood upright without brush or comb, eyes sunk deep in their orbits, and his incessant talking induced me to conclude that he was fast talking himself away. He had been some years resident in Odessa. Nobody knew what brought him there, nor whence he came. He had contrived to eke out an existence by giving lessons in English to the Polish youngsters who flock there in the summer, and he had made some few acquaintances among his countrymen. He had the reputation of being a harum-scarum, good sort of a wild, mad fellow, who not having the means of supporting himself, was about to increase them by taking a wife who had as few means as himself. He was on the point of starting for St. Petersburg, when I was informed of his wish to find a travelling companion; and as his knowledge of the language allowed him to perform the journey without any of those inconveniences to which I should, as a perfect novice, have been unavoidably exposed, we soon made an arrangement, which both parties considered so advantageous as to allow of no possible cause for future arbitration. It may be well supposed, however, that a man setting out upon a journey of at least fifteen hundred miles to secure the object of his affections would be no very amusing companion, and would have very little variety of conversation. The charms of his future, all the ends of verse and scraps of poetry, all the farce in fact of lovers' vows and prayers, are no very amusing things for those who, having long since passed through these ordeals, have little interest in the affairs

of others who are to learn the lesson which they know by heart already.

In this case, however, no such cause of complaint could I bring against my friend, who seemed as little inclined to talk about love as I to hear him, and never once introduced the subject unless occasionally to exclaim, "What a fool I am!" This was the first amatory effusion which I heard, and it was caused, probably, by the circumstance of our arriving at the first post. The stopping of the carriage, and the variety of trifling occupations which changing horses always gives rise to when travelling in Russia, called forth this ejaculation.

We had arrived at Coblevoy, the seat of General Cobly, a veteran of the British army long resident in Russia, and ci-devant civil governor of Odessa. A small neat house, with a few trees, a pond of water, some twenty sheep in an adjoining field, the post-house, and about five more cottages, form what appears in the map of Russia, and in large letters, as the town of Coblevoy.

He was one of the few characters who could give an idea of a Commodore Trunyon, unadulterated and genuine, as Smollet has represented his hero. Though a landsman, he could challenge any son of the seas for facility in swearing; and no instance, perhaps, ever occurred, where the national oath of —— sustained its reputation better than from the continued use which the old general made of it. In the presence of kings and princes, of maids of honour or of ladies of high rank, Cobly prefaced, intermingled, and concluded

every speech, however long or short, with the oath. When civil governor of Odessa, this oath, like the knife and tobacco-box of Walter the Doubter, served him as a warrant and constable. Little versed in any but his native language, he addressed plaintiff and defendant in the same terms. "What do you come here troubling me for?—— Can't you keep the peace, and leave off making mischief in this way? Go home, both of you, ——, and mind your own business, or ——, I will have you both punished in future:" prefacing or concluding each expression with his favourite oath. This, addressed to Russian ears, and as intelligible to the plaintiff as to the defendant, served, like the decision of his prototype, to balance the account. At all times of the day, and hours of the night, he was to be found at his post. He would give any body audience, and at any time; he made no distinction of persons; and in all his judgments he was sure to conclude, as he had commenced his oration, by his favourite oath.

His present hobby, now that he was retired from public life (for though an impartial magistrate, and unimpeachable in all things regarding his duties, he did not find these so light as he would have wished, and retired from office upon some of the common pleas made use of on such occasions), his present hobby, I say, was to improve the quality of Russian wool, and this he proposed to do by first improving the quality of Russian mutton. His speculation succeeded to the best of his wishes, for he could boast of having the best sheep in the whole government of

Odessa. He could abuse all other mutton with a good grace, as he really put and cut an excellent leg upon his own table. The care of his sheep occupied all his leisure hours, and dissipated that time which hangs in general so heavy upon the hands of those who, quitting public life, speculate upon finding what they are universally disappointed in attaining, the *otium cum dignitate;* so that really, as he himself died before his plans had entirely ruined him, he may be said to have fully succeeded in his undertaking.

It was about six o'clock when we arrived at the general's estate: the sun was still above the horizon, but remained immersed in thick clouds. There was a chilliness in the air; and a melancholy disagreeable kind of sensation, a sort of *all-overness,* which is perfectly indescribable, but which always arises from physical causes, came over us. This was not dissipated by the cries of a human being, who was evidently suffering under the lash; and, jumping out of the calash, my companion found the worthy general flogging a peasant, who was lying upon the ground, pressed to it by a man of weight sitting upon his neck, whilst two men secured his legs. The chastiser was lashing away with an English hunting whip upon an indescribable part, which at that present moment had the appearance of a round of corned beef red with saltpetre. Between each stroke of the whip, however, the general thought right to add a moral to a physical expression; and when its stroke could not be heard, the ear caught the sounds of "—— sir! you'll get drunk on a Sunday again, and give the sheep nothing to drink!"

It is impossible to say how much might have been cut away of the criminal for so heinous an offence, had not the stopping of our carriage and the sight of my companion, who was an acquaintance of the general's, stopped the punishment for the present. We were both of us heartily welcomed; and after a full explanation had been given of the cause which compelled the general to make use of his paternal influence, we were invited to take some tea. Time, however, was not to be lost; and in spite of all the solicitations to survey the sheep, and hear their history, we resolved to shake hands with our countryman, and proceed on our journey. The wind lulled as night approached, and before we gained the next post-house, still skirting along the bay, it had died away; but autumn was too far advanced to allow of a genial warmth succeeding to the coldness of the wind. A sharp frost supplied its place, and when we arrived at the post-house we put on our furs.

Here we met with the first difficulty in our journey, for we were informed that no horses were to be procured till the following morning; and our *podoroshna*, which is a kind of government order for those who travel by the imperial post (a monopoly), and without which horses cannot be procured, would not, upon this occasion, serve our turn. The feldjagers going backwards and forwards with despatches employed most of the government horses; and the postmasters, from fear of being roughly handled if they should not have sufficient for the couriers, would

only hire out such as were above the quantity they are by law obliged to furnish.

My companion, who was an old traveller, pretended that we were English couriers, charged with despatches, and produced, in fact, some bundles of papers which had rather an official appearance. He protested he would inform against the post-master. All would not do, however; there was no spread eagle upon the letters, nor had we either any thing in the shape of uniforms upon our backs, or any decoration at our button-hole. With these, perhaps, we might have succeeded; but our appearance showed nothing military.

Threats not succeeding, we resolved to try the most infallible of all remedies in the Russian empire, — viz. a bribe. We offered to pay double, but still we could not succeed; and my companion only got for answer one of the numerous proverbs with which every soul is furnished, and which, though uncouth to translate, was emphatic enough in the mother tongue: "I could not give them, if Christ himself were lame." After such an answer, and with the promise of having the horses at four, A. M., we proceeded to make our arrangements for the night, and retired to the inn to take up our lodging.

We did not expect to find beds or bedding, nor even a sofa to recline upon, for these are hardly to be found in the most civilised parts of the empire; but here, in fact, was a single room forming the whole of the house, with a high table in the centre, and some wooden benches fixed to the wall. It was Sunday evening, a time of merriment in all countries,

except England; and to dance of a Sunday is a privilege which the Russian boor can boast over the English clown. A small farthing rushlight, stuck up at one end of the room, rendered the darkness just visible, but hardly allowed us to see the musician, who was playing upon a three-stringed instrument commonly used in Russia. It is played with a bow, but hardly emits any sound. Some eight or ten men were dancing together, — if shaking the hands, and making some motion with the feet, can be so called. The fair sex were excluded from this amusement, than which really nothing can appear more uncouth or barbarous. We were consequently soon satisfied with the scene, and having taken some slight refreshment with which we were provided, returned to our carriage, where I should doubtless have slept very comfortably till morning, had I not been aroused every time I shut my eyes by the constant ejaculations of my companion. What it was I could not ascertain; but never could I imagine a criminal, the night previous to his execution, utter more horrid sounds than this instructor of ingenuous youth gave vent to in his sleep. He was not quiet an instant, but jumped up and down from his seat perpetually, exclaiming each time — "Hy! Hey! what! murder! thieves! hey! what! come, oh God!" &c. It was in vain I spoke to him; he awoke immediately, and said he had been dreaming, but as soon as the conversation ceased he relapsed into his former half somnolent state. Such was the way in which I passed the greater part of the night, and I

should have been much quieter in one of the cells in Newgate.

Exhausted as I was, I got about half an hour's sleep, and was then roused by the whistling of the post-boys, who were putting to the cattle. My companion, who had slipped out unawares, was busy in paying the post-master, and I left the calash to take a view of the country, but could perceive merely the Black Sea on my right, and on my left a plain as flat and smooth as the sea itself. The morning was beautifully fine, the sky cloudless, the sun bright, but without warmth, and the air had the chilly feel of autumn. We proceeded on our journey at a fair pace, for the roads were still good, and we certainly averaged eight miles per hour.

Let no one suppose, however, that travelling in Russia is very expeditious; it is quite a mistaken notion; for in spite of the galloping of the horses, and of the noise of the drivers, so much time is lost in changing, that where the posts are short it is well known that the feld-jagers will go the whole distance of the stage in the same time they take to change their cattle at the post. If the government couriers, who have the most persuasive and forcible arguments to produce despatch, are thus delayed, it is much worse with other travellers. Under the most favourable circumstances, supposing the horses to be in the stable, and the post-boys in the yard, I may venture to say that twenty minutes may be considered a fair allowance of time for changing. It happens, however, very frequently, that the horses are in a field a

verst distant, and the post-boys are at the same distance in another direction. Then, when both arrive, there is some squabbling and quarrelling among the boys which of them is to drive; and they have various modes of deciding this question. There is one very singular manner of proceeding. They cast lots with small pieces of bone which once formed part of a pig's foot, and which they use for games and various other purposes. When this is all settled, the post-master, who has been wholly unemployed all the time, thinks at last of copying the *podoroshna* into the book, which, being a long history of what the traveller is, in what class he is placed, whence he comes, whither he is going, and many more important circumstances, — a ceremony to be performed at every stage, — takes up about ten minutes more. It often happened to us, therefore, to lose forty or fifty minutes in changing the relays.

I may state it as a fair comparison, that the government couriers, under the utmost despatch, are longer in performing the distance of a hundred miles than any of our light coaches in England, and that plebeian travellers do not go faster over the ground than the vans which are used for luggage. In our journey from Odessa to St. Petersburg we never performed more than one hundred and fifty versts, about one hundred and ten miles English, in twenty-four hours; we were only two in a calash, with no baggage, and we had seldom less than six horses tacked to our equipage. Now, coaches perform one hundred and fifty-four miles, English, or two hundred versts, between the

hours of five A. M and ten P. M. of the same day. There is an exception to be made in Russian expedition when his imperial majesty is on the wing: then he may be said to fly. But all the horses are in readiness for days before, and the best are selected; and they are fed for the purpose, and flogged for the purpose, and many are killed by the purpose.

In summer, when the roads are good, travelling is but little more expeditious than it is in France, but much more so than it is in some parts of Germany. In autumn before sledging commences, and in spring when the frost is breaking up, the roads are almost impracticable. They are formed of a very broad slip of ground, inclosed between trees, and the traveller has the privilege of going in whatever part he likes. Nothing is done to consolidate them, neither gravel, nor stones, nor pavement; they are unsophisticated creations of nature. When the soil is clayey, it is almost impossible to proceed in the rainy season; the ruts are axle-deep, and no number of horses can move the vehicle at more than a foot pace.

To proceed, however, on our journey. We now left the Black Sea; and travelling along at a merry pace through a country not enlivened by a shrub, much less by a human being, no habitation being visible but the house where we changed horses, we reached the river Bog in the evening. The river here is very broad, being rather an arm of the sea. On the opposite side, and somewhat elevated above its banks, is the new town of Nikolaieff. The scenery is rather more

attractive; there are some islands with some wood upon them, scattered about in the great arm, which flows majestically on; and though the distance across is very considerable, we were towed over by means of a rope fastened at both ends to a post on each shore. Horses, carriages and all, were rolled into the ferry boat, and soon wafted across; for the wind being directly behind us, we hoisted a sail, which expedited our passage.

The new town of Nikolaieff, named after his imperial majesty, resembles all Russian towns which are not more than a century old. You may say, *here the town should be.* All the streets are laid out at right angles: the plan is complete; nothing is requisite but houses to fill it up. The church, cleanly whitewashed, as is customary, and the governor's house, are two very conspicuous objects. The inhabitants are chiefly Jews, who, from certain circumstances, thrive better here than in most parts of the empire. There is a large bazaar, with every appearance of activity about it. Were there only people and houses, Nikolaieff would be a considerable place. Few, however, and uncivilised as are its inhabitants, we had time, even in changing horses, to find an Englishman with a numerous family occupying one of the best houses in the place. It had been deemed possible to carry the water of the Bog to Odessa; and Mr. Upton wished to have an opportunity of showing his skill, but I believe the plan was given up without a trial. His tea and cold mutton, which must certainly have had a cross of Cobly's sheep, were not unwelcome; and we

took leave of him with sincere and heartfelt wishes for his success.

The removal of Admiral Greig from this government will, in all probability, be most severely felt by the people. The causes of this admit of as many interpretations as his friends or enemies choose to give; but as no public press permits one to judge of the merits and demerits of individuals, there is nothing but private rumour to guide us in the judgment we may form upon such subjects, and consequently it is almost impossible to come at the truth. The high posts assigned him upon quitting his government are testimonials sufficient, for his friends, that the man ranks as highly as ever in the estimation of his sovereign, however prudent it may have been to change the governor.

It is difficult to convince those who have not seen with their own eyes, nor heard with their own ears, nor breathed a Russian atmosphere, how little the despot or autocrat of such a country has within his immediate power. The machine of government is not simplified by autocratic ukases. There is wheel within wheel, and interest within interest, as much as in any constitutional form of proceeding. The Emperor may command, and, if the thing commanded clash not with other interests, he will be readily obeyed.

Let an humble individual be ordered to Siberia, and hardly is the command issued ere the culprit is upon his road thither.

In such instances, despotism enjoys all its privi-

leges. Turn, however, to an abuse, and let the command be given to rectify it, and then the limits of autocratic power will be appreciated.

How is an abuse in the government of Kazan to be rectified by an appeal to the sovereign at St. Petersburg? The Emperor appoints a commission of investigation. Can he depend upon the incorruptible fidelity of the commissioners? No. The private ear can be granted but to few, and such have their own interests to serve; nor could it listen to the complaints of all who would approach it.

How many means are there of protecting the accused when more than his own interest depends upon his being pronounced innocent of an accusation! What chance has he of defence when only his own interest is at stake?

By trial by jury? There is no jury.

By the pleading of his lawyer? There is no pleading.

By the senate's decision? Who can impugn the senate?

By public opinion? By the public press? Neither exists.

All these means, to which he resorts in other countries, are not available to him in this. He has but one method left him — an appeal to the sovereign through a third person. Can he find this person?

A variety of circumstances may have conspired to be unfavourable to the Admiral. Each of these has been exaggerated by his enemies; and what foreigner has not a host in Russia? Still the Emperor may

have reason to believe that all is an intrigue; he may find no fault in him, but he may be obliged to remove him. The interests of an empire may be forwarded by the sacrifice of an individual who sacrificed himself to those very interests. A false idea of patriotism may remove from favour the noblest patriot.

Let not people suppose that despots have it all their own way. Of all sovereigns they are the most dependent upon those who surround them. It is the press, and the press alone, which can promote the good of mankind. With all its abuses, grievous as they may be, it is still the rock of salvation for the feeble and persecuted. Full and free discussion brings abuses to light; nay more, it rectifies them. How much more corruption must there be in a country where there is no free press!

In Russia (including the army and navy), there are six millions of people in government pay. Six millions out of a population of sixty-two millions employed in the machine for ruling. This sets some bounds to the idea of autocratic government. It is difficult for one man to compel six millions of people to act as he commands them. Compare the British constitution with this, and how does the supposed complication of king, lords, and commons, with all the patronage which they may possess, resolve itself into simplicity!

It is not merely by perusing the laws and regulations of states, as they are given to the public, or as they are reported by travellers, that we can judge of their administration. He alone can know any thing of these matters who has lived in the country, who

has seen and felt the working of the machine, and not merely gazed upon its external form.

It may be said that the laws are just and good; and so they may be. I speak not of the laws, but of their expounders. I speak not of the will of the sovereign, but of its executors. The administrators of a will which desires the welfare of a people dispersed over a country equal to the rest of Europe in extent of surface, are the responsible persons. I appeal to those alone who live in the country. Let such describe the senate, the police system of jobbing, from the greatest to the pettiest of transactions, and they will explain how much the sovereign has in his direct power. Let such say that the removal of an officer from a high situation is any proof of his demerits.

To continue our journey, which is so much the lighter, as we have added our mite to the opinion of all the Admiral's countrymen; for who amongst us is not proud of a man known for his integrity, his learning, his science, his general acquirements, greater perhaps than are the share of any individual in the empire, and whose fame has added an honour to his own country by the estimation it has been held in abroad?

There is this advantage in travelling in many parts of Russia,—the traveller, losing nothing by his journeying at night, sees often as much as in noonday: and so we lost nothing by this practice. The third day, however, we left the lone and dreary steppe, where all was barren as between Dan and Beersheba, —a vast plain, a sea of dry land. We bade farewell to

it as we entered Ekateringrad, which introduced us to vegetable and animal life. It was as the fountain in the desert; but we refreshed oursselves with more than the crystal spring. Beefsteaks and English porter are to be found on the borders of this desert; and the walls of the post-houses are adorned with the Prodigal Son, the Gentle Shepherd, the Woodman, and a variety of such prints as adorn similar habitations in their mother-country, from which these have been all imported. It is wonderful to see such a prodigious number of English engravings in so remote a part of the world. We refreshed ourselves, and proceeded, and every verst we journeyed marked an improvement in the country.

We were now in Poland, one of the most fertile provinces, and in the government of Podolia. A broken and variegated country in the decline of summer was more congenial than the burnt and withered steppe which we had so lately quitted; but the contrast alone made it pleasing; for there was nothing worthy of our notice, except as we approached the termination of the first half of our journey, when we overtook about three hundred Turkish prisoners taken at Anapa. Finer men were never seen; erect, swarthy, muscular beings, well clothed, and with content lighting up their countenances. There is something noble in the appearance of a Turk, even of the lowest order. Even the *canaille* have an air *distingué* about them: there is nothing vulgar in their appearance; and compared with the brutal, filthy

peasantry, who quitted their dens to gaze and spit upon them as they passed along, because they were not Christians, they resembled beings of another and a higher sphere.

The only other object worthy of notice is the beautiful bird called the Steppe Parrot, which is common in this country. It is the roller of Bewick. Its plumage is beautiful, and when flying in the sun it looks like a moving rainbow. I endeavoured several times to get near them with my gun, but in vain; they fly or roll along in their flight, and are very shy, perching upon the highest branches of trees, and watching continually.

The fifth day brought us to our half-way house, fatigued somewhat from want of sleep; for my companion, though gay and amusing by day, was far from being so at night. He continued his ejaculations incessantly, and even in the broad daylight would burst forth when conversation ceased for a while. Whether, as Dr. Madden reports of Johnson, it was the fear of death which made him repeat continually to himself, "To go we know not where," or whether he was too sure where he should go, it is certain that his ejaculations were very inharmonious. "Hey! — murder! — thieves!" are bad enough to hear of in the daytime; but at night, when passing through a wood half asleep one's self, and the imagination always prone to gloomy thoughts, such sounds are vastly terrifying.

We arrived, however, quite safe and sound at the gardens of Alexandrine, and lodged in one of the

travellers' pavilions. The house was tenantless, for the old Countess had proceeded to Odessa for the sake of seeing his blessed majesty; and nothing was to be procured upon the premises, as she had taken *the keys* with her. We halted, therefore, only for the night, and hired Jews' horses to transport us to Kiev the following day. It was an unpropitious morning, and when we started a thick fog enveloped us and all around us.

There is no feeling of the body more miserable than that produced by cold and damp early in a morning, when one has just turned out of a warm bed, with the prospect of a miserable journey in view. We had contrived by some means to get a cup of coffee quite hot, and this comforted us a little; and I may give this piece of advice to all travellers in Russia, or elsewhere, to drink neither wine nor spirits, if they wish to be warm and comfortable without being restless and feverish. I have tried both plans, and am not a member of the temperance society either; but long experience enables me to say that warm coffee or tea will supply the dram, and prove more comfortable to such as will try the experiment. Having sipped our hot liquid, therefore, we proceeded on our route; and with the exception of a large wolf, which regarded us very coolly from the skirts of a wood, nor was at all intimidated by our shouting, we met nothing social till we arrived in the very centre of the sainted city.

It was dark when we came to our halt, and putting up at the Golden Dragon we were contented to get

any fare we could find. We had only bare sofas to lie upon, but they were more comfortable than the corner of a carriage against which to recline the head. The rain poured down in torrents during the whole of the night; and the following morning, which was to have been devoted to seeing some of the miracles performed by the saints, was quite as unpropitious. The fog was so dense as to prevent us seeing the cathedral, which was only a few yards from our windows. Still we hoped the weather might clear up; but the rain increased towards noon, and continued to do so the remainder of the day.

The night was as the day had been; and when the postillions arrived in the morning, the rain still poured down in such torrents that we were obliged to send them away, and postpone our departure till the following day. No chance had we of seeing the wonders of the place; the large plain upon which the cathedral stands was covered with water, which even penetrated into the inn where we were lodged, and covered the ground floor. Never did I witness, not even in mountainous countries, such torrents of rain so long continued. We had at least sixty hours of incessant pouring: no very auspicious omen for the commencement of so long a journey.

The following morning was fair; at least the rain fell less heavily, and we got a glimpse of the town as we left it in the rear. When we descended the long steep hill upon which what there is of a town is situated, we found that the wooden bridge which conducts over the ancient Borysthenes had lost half

its bulwarks. The water covered the planks at each extremity to at least a foot's depth. The river, swollen to double its ordinary size, rolled impetuously along, and the wicker ropes which connect the different links of the bridge seemed no longer secure against the force of the sweeping torrent. The horses themselves seemed doubtful of their own safety, pawing upon the loose planks, which sunk deeper from the weight of their feet. The post-boys looked surly and stupid, crossing themselves as they turned back to look upon the cathedral, the anchor of hope, and proceeded slowly along the bridge, which, when crossed in safety, no longer looked so terrific.

We halted, when safe on the opposite side, fast and sure amongst sand and brush-wood; and it required additional horses to put us again in motion. These arrived speedily; and whilst the boys were engaged in fastening the ropes to the carriage we looked back upon our past danger, and gazed upon the oldest city in the Russian empire. It is, however, rather the embryo of a city; for though a large space has been chalked out for constructing a town, yet three parts remain to be filled up. The site is, in reality, most imposing; it is upon a hill, or range of hills, at a considerable elevation above the Dnieper, which rolls rapidly below. The rocks, which are situated upon the water's edge, are covered with verdure, festooning from their summit to their base. The view from the top of the different hills must be most extensive and picturesque; though we must

speak from hearsay only, the rain and fog preventing us from seeing any thing when we were in the town itself.

There are various circumstances connected with the city which enhance its national attractions at certain seasons of the year to those who are not admirers of the picturesque alone. There is a certain settling of accounts, unknown to the pilgrims who flock here in all directions, without scrip or garment, to square their spiritual reckonings. Multitudes of these poor creatures, men, women, and children, perform immense journeys to lay down their burden at the shrines of the saints.

A pilgrimage to Kiev is considered an infallible atonement for all the sins hitherto committed; the debt is cancelled, the score is wiped off, to him who, having marched some few hundred miles under the infliction of corporeal punishment, enters the sanctuary of Kiev, falls prostrate before the saint, and with a contrite heart exclaims, "*Baja moia veena vat.*" If to this confession be added some small donation to the priests, he will not go in vain; without the latter, it will be in vain that he go. Men must labour in their vocation, as Falstaff says, and the labourer is worthy of his hire. In no country is this better understood than in Russia, where the priests, being for the most part an uneducated people, do not refrain from exacting the utmost in their power.

As a specimen of the degree of delinquency to which these faithful servants of their Lord are known to descend, I will relate the following anecdote, told

me by a Polish nobleman, on whose estate the circumstance occurred.

In one of the triennial visits which he was accustomed to pay his peasants, they all preferred loud complaints against the clergy on the estate. They spoke of exactions which they were unable to contribute, and described the conduct of the clergy as unworthy and illegal. The Count sent for one of the popes, and remonstrated with him upon his conduct. The pope begged that the complainants might be brought before him. On confronting one of the peasants, who had preferred some charges against him, he replied to the man's accusations with perfect *sang froid*, "Why, sir, the case is this: the man importuned me to marry his child two years before the age sanctioned by the law and the church. I did it to oblige him, but in doing so I rendered myself subject to severe penalties; I must naturally be paid for such risks."

There are certain periods, I observed, when affairs of a more temporal kind occupy the whole town of Kiev for days together. It is not the humble and contrite pilgrim who alone usurps all the privileges of a journey to this sainted city. The Polish nobility meet here annually to settle their accounts, or rather to make such arrangements as may allow them to carry on the war a little longer; for what Pole ever understood the meaning of the word settling? It is then, however, that farms are let, leases renewed, tenants dismissed; in fact, all the common practices which take place in most countries at the general rent day. This part of the business is managed very

differently, however, to what may be conjectured by those who have only seen Wilkie's inimitable picture. Still, however, it is got through, and then follows a very different order of things. Business is not the sole object of the meetings of Kiev, at least such business as concerns the landlord and tenants; there are other accounts to be adjusted. The sub-letting act is not repealed, nor is the country free from its curse; but still there are other speculations besides those in which wheat and brandy are concerned: nor are they of a more spiritual nature either.

It must be remembered that although rents may be paid but once a year in Poland, still spending money goes on all the year round; and, of the expenditure, gambling forms the greatest item. There is much more play than cash, and more debts than ready money. The want of this is supplied, however, by notes of hand — I. O. U's.; such payment having been first instituted, as we are informed, during the siege of Granada; and these notes are payable at the Contract of Kiev. Here they are exchanged (which is very rare) for ready money, or they are cancelled by a run of good luck on the opposite side, and are issued now by the former creditor, with his signature as a debtor. The original bond may be, however, much increased; and payment being pressed for, the estates are pawned or sold.

When the sums are not so large, nor the means of payment so considerable, still the same abominable system prevails; and many a man returns home lighter than he arrived by some thousand ducats, having left

his coachman, horses, and some half dozen servants in pawn with his successful adversary. Of all the people in the world, the Poles are the most reckless gamblers. The French and Italians are fond of play; but there is a method in their procedure: some system and some bounds are prescribed. Not so with a Pole; he sits down to play for all he has.

I have known a man of high rank lose in one evening his estate, all his peasantry, his house and furniture, his stud of horses, and, descending in the scale, his carriage, and coachman, and valet, and finally the watch which he had in his pocket. England blushes for one Long Pole. Here is a nation of such.

Gambling supersedes all other considerations; and we find in the history of the dismemberment of Poland under Catherine, that they were often engaged at play in the camp when they ought to have been fighting their battles in the field. It is not their patriotism or their bravery which is impugned by the assertion. These will bear the severest scrutiny, and will come purer from the crucible of investigation. But still their insatiable passion for play is a spot too deep to be washed out. The largest fortune in Poland in olden times, when it was proverbial that it rained water in other towns, but ducats in Dantzic, was lost in Paris in the course of one short winter.

To return to Kiev, however, we find that there are other means of disposing of superfluous cash at the Contract; feasting and jollification form no unimportant items in the expenditure. Hungarian wines,

imperial Tokay, are to be found in the vaults if not in the catacombs of Kiev. He pays dear for his taste who likes Tokay.

There is a theatre opened, some amateur concerts are given, and Warsaw even contributes her share to the amusements of the far-distant city by supplying the market with a variety of live stock. As it is a masculine concern, intrigue forms less of the plan of actions than in most Polish concerns, for the Poles are not deficient in this respect; but the character of the fair sex who sojourn in the city during the Contract is not more sullied than before.

Some matrimonial concerns have been transacted in a strange way, however, on these occasions. To lose each other's mistresses at play is a common occurrence; and if we examine into the causes of divorce and its repeated occurrence, nay, its universal toleration and sanction by the laws of the land, we may not be too uncharitable to suppose that wives may be played for, as any other exchangeable commodity. Now that Poland no longer exists, perhaps this crying sin will be no longer sanctioned by law, or rather the law will have the power of preventing its so ready accomplishment.

As the Poles are rigid Catholics, it puzzled me to know why this continual divorce, not allowed by the church, was permitted so frequently. The loophole of retreat lies in proving that the former marriage not having been legal is consequently null and void. This farce has been repeated as much as four or five times, each previous marriage being

easily proved illegal as soon as the parties found it convenient to separate, or one party determined to have another companion.

In the last Diet convoked by the Emperor previous to the revolution, this subject was recommended with much force and feeling in the speech from the throne to the consideration of the assembly. Notwithstanding this address, it was rejected by the Diet, which proved at least that the Diet had means of doing harm even in the face of imperial mandates. It is too true, and I speak from authority, that there does not exist a family of rank in Poland in which some of its members have not to plead guilty to this violation of all morality and decency.

The spires of Kiev were lost to view as we passed into a thick wood soon after arriving on the other side. The soil is all sand, and this is the worst stage between Odessa and Petersburg; but on this occasion the torrents of rain had so consolidated the sand as to allow the wheels to run over it without imbedding themselves, and we performed the first post with tolerable speed. From hence we passed slowly through forests of interminable birch, with only a few scattered houses here and there to make some little break in the awful monotony, until we arrived at Chernigoff, the capital of Little Russia. The streets were neatly paved and the pavement swept clean, the houses approximated, and living beings walked about. We breakfasted at the inn, which was miserable enough; but there is no good inn in Russia.

My companion, who amused himself by talking to the post-boys, the merriest of all the people in the empire, asked the name of the governor of the town as we left it.

"Is he a Russian?" inquired my friend.

"No," he emphatically replied, "he is a *little* Russian."

As the distinction rather confused me, I took some pains to find out in what it consisted, and my companion commenced again interrogating the boy; but as we were just about to ascend a hill, the boy gave a shrill whistle, at which the horses set off at full speed, and he talked to the beasts, as they galloped up the hill, which was steep and sandy, in much these terms—"Now, my pigeons! go it, my turtles! make short work of it, my jewels! that's right, my darlings! whish! whish! whish! Go to your oats, you . . . . . !" changing his tone, as his words converted themselves into oaths.

When they had accomplished their task, he informed us that *little* Russians were much more clever than other Russians; that they were not Muscovites; that they were good writers, and all the clerks in the different government offices were taken from this province. To make use of his pen like a little Russian, is proverbial in the empire.

Upon further inquiry I found that the post-boy's veracity could not be impugned, and some more substantial reasons were discovered in the circumstance that Little Russia was a province of Poland in former times; and, though the inhabitants had lost their

name and their freedom, they had not lost that which man can neither give nor take away. Still the Poles, in all their distress and misery, and with all their crimes, are a century before the Russians in civilisation. The very post-boys are sensible of the difference, and will not confound a Russian with a Malo-Russian.

We halted at Climoffsky, an estate of Count Romanzoff's, which was under the superintendence of an English steward; and as we remained there two days, I had some little opportunity of ascertaining the truth of the oft-repeated assertion, that the Russian peasantry are the happiest people under the canopy of heaven, and that although all are not in a situation to be called easy, or in easy circumstances, still they are always well clothed, and never want the staff of life.

The name of Count Romanzoff was not unknown to me; he had converted the wooden town of Homel into brick and mortar, which, in this country, is as great an undertaking as that of the Roman emperor, who, when he came to the throne, found the city built of brick, but left it shining in marble. He had bequeathed a large library to the public, and had instituted a Lancasterian school. This made so favourable an impression, and seemed to argue so great a desire of marching with the spirit of the times, that I was really prepared to meet with the happiest peasantry under the canopy of heaven.

There was also a material advantage in this instance: the steward was not one of those barbarians

to be met with on every estate, who squeeze the last farthing out of the poor peasant to enrich themselves. He was a well-educated Englishman, who quitted England late in life, and was consequently alive to all those humane feelings which such an education and such an example as his native land affords should always produce. This was the preface, therefore, to the book, which I was now about to open.

I found the land, in the first place, very unproductive, being a sandy soil, and yielding but scanty crops. The harvest had just been got in, so that all things promised for the best. I was surprised, however, to see a squalid-looking people, with no appearance of health in their faces. I saw them labour, and it appeared to me that an English daily labourer would do as much in an hour as any two of them would do in a day; though they were goaded to work by the lash, and half starved into the bargain. Upon inquiry why this was allowed, I received for answer, that they were a lazy set of villains. At present they had corn, because the harvest was just got in; but before midsummer they would not have bread to eat, and would then come upon the books. The more I inquired the less I seemed to understand; but I found sufficient to prove that the system adopted towards these poor wretches, far from making them the happiest under the canopy of heaven, must leave few in hell much unhappier than they.

The following anecdote was told me by the steward himself, as he pointed out to me a pretty-looking woman, whose life he had saved a few months before.

He was walking in the fields, and saw her lying in the path, exhausted and speechless. He first thought she was intoxicated, and was about to make use of his cane; but soon discovering that she was in a state of inanition, he had her carried home, and warmth and food applied by degrees, so that she came round; and it was found that she had been several days without food, unless a kind of cake made of the roots and leaves of trees pounded together may be so called. She had lately produced an offspring as famished as herself, and had no milk to give it.

Such was the account of the steward himself, an Englishman, such as I have described him; but sad experience obliges me to say that none forget the blessings they have enjoyed in their own country so much as those who quit it, and have power put into their hands abroad.

More than one English steward, within the sphere of my own knowledge, has been obliged to leave the country for cruelty towards the peasants whom they have had to superintend. Men, nay even Russian slaves, cannot bear more than a certain point; and as the knout and Siberia are the worst things which can happen to them, they are driven sometimes to believe that the latter is more tolerable than their present state. They rise *en masse*, and this calls immediately for the interference of the government. Persons are sent to make inquiry, in order to redress their grievances. If the stewards accused have not the means of bribing these commissioners, they have nothing to do but escape as fast as possible out of the country.

The peasants are found justified in their complaints, but not justified in revolting. The ringleaders, that is to say the *ablest bodied* men, are taken for soldiers, some score women and children are flogged, and a new steward is appointed; and so impartial justice is rendered to all parties.

As we were returning home, we heard the cries of a man, and soon discovered the cause; for two others were scourging him much in the same way as I mentioned having seen a man scourged at Coblevoy.

"Give it him well," said the steward, as we passed by; "the rascal has been at some mischief."

I asked if it was allowed to inflict corporeal punishment at the discretion of the man who was then chastising, the under-steward of an under-steward.

"Not exactly," he replied, "but nearly so. Any thing short of making the people rebel in a body, which they will not do till they are pushed to the last extremity, is allowable."

"Might not some milder means," I asked, "be adopted as a substitute for this disgraceful punishment?"

"Not at all," he answered; "we could do nothing without the rods here: women and men, we have at them both, or we could do nothing with them. When I first came into the country I thought as you did. Such means were repugnant to my feelings. I talked to them, and tried gentle means; but I never forgave a Russian but he was the first to show me his ingratitude."

"What have they to be grateful for?" I asked.

"It is true," said he; "but without flogging we could never find out any of their misdemeanours."

"And how do you do it by that means?"

"Oh, flog all who are suspected, till the sinner cries out peccavi."

"Rather an arbitrary method," I replied.

"What is to be done?" he answered. "A peasant will call God to witness, go upon his knees, cross himself, and pray God to strike him dead upon the spot if he be not innocent of the charge brought against him; and then, as soon as his back begins to smart, he cries out '*venavat*,' and confesses the whole."

"Last week we had a good flogging match; and I will relate to you the particulars of the case, which will give you some insight into the superstition of the people. Twenty bushels of corn were one night taken out of the barn: as usual, nobody was the thief. The peasants who had been working upon that part of the estate came from a considerable distance, at least fifteen miles, and were naturally suspected. All called God to witness that they had not committed the theft. We resorted, however, to the following expedient. Calling them all together, in number about thirty, I harangued them at the barn door, from whence the corn had been stolen, having first procured a live black cock, and a large iron pot, the bottom of which was well covered with soot. I first asked them individually if they were Christians; to which they all replied in the affirmative, and made the sign of the cross. I then asked them individually if they had committed the theft; to which they re-

plied in the negative, making also the sign of the cross. Well then, I observed, as you are all innocent, and moreover all Christians, you will prove it by the following trial; and at the same time I pulled a crucifix out of my pocket, and tied it round the cock's neck. At the sight of this they all fell to crossing themselves in right earnest. Having done this, I went into the barn, in the middle of which I had ordered a table to be placed, and took the pot and the cock with the crucifix tied round its neck with me, and allowed none to follow me. Having put the fowl under the black iron pot upon the table I returned, and shut the barn door, ordering my under-steward to go to the other side, where there was also a door, and examine each man's fingers as he came out. 'Now,' said I, 'my friends, you will go in one by one at this door, and place your two fore-fingers upon the bottom of the pot, and make the sign of the cross upon it; and as you are all Christians, if any of you be guilty of the theft, as soon as you touch the pot with your fingers the cock will crow, and you will prove that you have perjured yourselves.' I then opened the door, so as to let one only go in at a time, nor allow the second to proceed till the man at the opposite side gave notice that he had examined the fingers."

"Well," I observed, "was it an *experimentum crucis?*"

"Quite," he replied; "nine of them came out with clean fingers, not daring to touch the pot, lest the cock should crow."

"And what then?" I exclaimed.

"Oh, they all confessed the theft, and we found the corn upon the premises, and flogged them all."

I observed several poor wretches, shivering and trembling, sitting at the doors of their cottages. It was a sunny day, and they were basking.

"They have all the ague," exclaimed the steward; "the situation is very swampy, it ruins the health of half the peasantry. A man can do no work who has the ague, or at least it is a pretext for the villains to be more lazy."

"A man is not much disposed to labour under an ague fit," I replied.

"I thought exertion was good," he answered; "and so I ordered that fellow whom you heard howling there to go and carry wood."

"You have forgotten that you are an Englishman, I think."

"My dear sir, you little know what these fellows are, or you would not talk thus; the more kind you are to them the more ungrateful they are. Nothing but the lash and the harshest treatment will make them do any thing."

As I looked about me, I could hardly believe that I could hear such language applied to any but beardless Ethiopians. The white faces, and long beards, and covered shoulders of the people before me, led me to believe that they could not be slaves. I called to mind the saying of Madame de Stael, when it was observed that "the blacks in the colonies were much

better off than the whites at home."—"That," replied she, "might be some consolation to the former, but very little to the latter." Further experience has, however, proved that a Russian peasant, unless a crown peasant, or under very favourable circumstances, would gladly change his lot with a slave of Jamaica.

Returning to the ague — I found that the peasants cured it themselves by drinking brandy, in which pepper, horse-radish, and spiders had been infused.

I could not convince a German physician who dined with us that arsenic was an effectual remedy; for, as to bark, who was to purchase it? He replied to me, that it cured the disease, but it produced dropsy by accumulating in the system. I asked him what was the general term of the peasant's existence in this part of the world.

"About forty-five, if they live upon the same spot all the time. There are many older men; but they have most of them left at eighteen, entered the army, and returned after twenty-five years' service. These are hardened, and spin out a little longer."

"What are the diseases which chiefly take them off?" I asked.

"Dropsy, or a chronic disease."

"What! without arsenic?"

He replied, smiling, "The brandy* is as bad as arsenic to them; this is the curse of their existence, and without remedy."

* Common raw spirit distilled from rye.

"How so?"

"It is the only produce of the estates, and all returns into one and the same coffer. All they labour for is to produce this; they sow the corn, convert it into brandy, and then buy it to drink. They are made for each other: as the fish for the sea, and the sea for the fish, so the peasant is made for the brandy, and *vice versâ*. If you have not before been in this country, you little know, sir, what are the pernicious effects of this spirit. The husband drinks it, and gives it to the wife, who even retails it *guttatim* to the suckling infant to prevent its crying, or to put it to sleep till its mother can return from the field and give it the breast."

"Do women who are nursing labour in the field?"

"Oh yes," he exclaimed, "I have known a woman go to the plough forty-eight hours after giving birth to a child."

"How was the infant nourished?" I inquired.

"By a plan which is truly wonderful, and of which I will show you an example; it is curious in every point of view, and shows the power of instinct in a most extraordinary way."

We forthwith went into a hut, in the centre of which was a cradle with a child fast asleep. Suspended over this, and hanging by a string to the roof, within reach of the child's mouth, was a bladder, half filled with milk, in which a small hole was made to admit a cow's teat to be inserted and tied in it. This artifice allowed the child to suck and get sufficient

milk without its pouring in too fast upon it; and in this way, forty-eight hours after delivery, the mother transfers the milk from her own breast to an artificial one; or if she has not sufficient milk of her own, makes use of cow's milk; and the infant has instinct enough to raise up its little head, and suck the artificial breast.

CHAP. XVIII.

ROUTE FROM CLIMOFFSKI TO ST. PETERSRURG. MOGHILOFF JEWS. WITEPSK. MEDITATIONS ON DISASTERS OF NAPOLEON. FIRST GLIMPSE OF IMPERIAL CITY. GENERAL OUTLINE. MAGNIFICENT CHAUSSEE. GERMAN COLONISTS. CANALS. CRETAN BULLS. GENERAL IMPRESSIONS. FALCONET'S STATUE. RECEIVED UPON ALIGHTING AT OUR DESTINATION BY CHEF DE CUISINE.

DURING our stay at Climoffski, which was only of two days' duration, I had an opportunity of ascertaining several points as to the state of the peasantry, and proving *that they were not the happiest under the canopy of heaven.* I found that, in spite of written laws and ukases, it remained in the power of the stewards, the sub-stewards, and under-stewards, and the sub-under-stewards, to exact money of them, to maltreat them, and to render them almost as miserable as they pleased. That these things are all contrary to law, I do not deny; but what are laws when the administrators of them are scoundrels? I found, to my mortification, that the old proverb of habit being second nature, was too much verified in the ready manner in which English stewards adopt the brutal customs of those miserable wretches, "dressed in a little brief authority," to whose cruelty so many are subjected.

We had to thank our host for much hospitality and kindness during our stay, and then proceeded on our

route, which became daily more dreary. Although in the month of September only, that most delightful of all months in England, we had frost every morning; the trees were stripping fast of their leaves; and pursuing a straight and rough road through continued forests of bare poles, with hardly a human creature to enliven it, was dull enough for a mere traveller; but for ourselves, one of whom was going to put into the lottery of marriage, and the other into that of settling in life, the prospects were rendered more dire by the combination and concurrence of external circumstances. The wind blew a hurricane, the snow drifted along in scattered flakes, and all the dreariness of dreary winter welcomed our approach to Moghiloff.

The town has nothing to recommend it, not even an inn; and we put up at a Jew's, a real son of Abraham, for the night. We got some beefsteaks, and some hay to lie upon, and paid for both the following day somewhat exorbitantly. I made a purchase of a pair of clogs lined with fur; they promised to keep my feet warm and dry, for the snow melted as it fell, so that I put them on to walk round the town in the evening. The following morning, as we were about to mount our carriage, and I to put on my clogs, I found to my sorrow that there was no means of doing so. My new leather clogs, lined with fur, and for which I had paid ten rubles, proved to be only the bark of a tree, painted black, which, after being soaked in rain and placed near the fire, split asunder, and were no more serviceable. This was a practical lesson that I received from these candidates for par-

liamentary honours, and I confess the cheat made me and my companion laugh so much that we were much indebted to Moses for his roguery.

The road from Moghiloff to Witepsk was heavy, and at times almost impracticable; we often tacked on twelve horses to a small vehicle, and then, as the Yankees say, *progressed* but slowly. We arrived, however, safe and sound the following morning, in spite of an accident which might have crushed us to death. In turning into the inn yard, the horses were too strong for the postillion, a mere urchin, which dragged the calash with great violence against the gate-post. The shock cut the carriage completely in two, the two fore wheels going into the yard, leaving us behind in the body of the coach, without receiving even a scratch. We were much alarmed, however; for the poor boy was dragged from his seat, and carried in with the fore wheels, and by his lamentable howlings we were convinced he was much injured. It proved in the end, however, that he was no more hurt than ourselves; but fearing we might cause him to be flogged for bad driving, he made use of this stratagem to excite our compassion, and mitigate our wrath. As soon as he found the coast was clear, off he started; nor could we find him again, nor get others to tell where he was. He could not be persuaded to come for his trink-geld, temptation enough at most times. Scourging was what he feared, and he would not risk this for the sake of a few kopecks.

Witepsk is a clean and good-looking town, and the inn has more accommodation than we had hitherto met with. We had now, indeed, come into a line of government inns, which were established after the peace, and where every thing may be procured good except beds. Large wide leather sofas are the only beds to be found in Russian inns, and lucky is he who can sleep upon them with a whole skin.

A pulicious fever, caused by lying upon an old leathern sofa, prevented me from closing my eyes, and allowed me to meditate at leisure upon the disasters of Napoleon.

Such was the sympathy excited by circumstances, that I questioned in my own mind whether any thing during the whole campaign had affected him more seriously than the restless night which he must have passed upon this sofa; and I came to the fair circumstantial conclusion, that Segur, in his history of the grand army, was mistaken in his diagnosis.

"Napoleon laboured," says Segur, "under a disease of the skin, vulgarly called itch, which much influenced his character: all who knew him allowed that he was no longer the same man as formerly."

Now I think it probable that this cutaneous affection was the result of the feeding of sundry little animals upon the body of the great conqueror; and that the defeat of the grand army was in reality due to one of those apparently trivial causes, which have often more influence upon sublunary affairs than man, in all his pride, is willing to admit.

If this be really the true state of the case, and I

have no doubts thereon myself, it fully accounts for the veneration in which all these creeping things are held in Russian houses; for they only attack the stranger and intruder: the natives they will not touch.

I was in attendance, at Odessa, on the old Princess ——, and sitting by her bed-side, when I observed several unseemly creatures crawling over her pillow. I felt rather embarrassed how to act, and was about to put my finger and thumb into warlike attitude; when she, perceiving my embarrassment, and discovering, by a turn of her head, the cause of it, coolly observed, "Ce ne sont que des punaises; elles ne me touchent jamais, et pour moi je les laisse tranquilles."

It is impossible to touch upon the French invasion with any degree of safety in this country. It was God and the Emperor who destroyed the invading foe; and who doubts it? All that I contend for is, that the battle is not always given to the strong; and upon the same principle that the Greek philosopher's child ruled over Athens, so did the bugs in Witepsk destroy the grand army.

As soon as the morning's itching had somewhat abated, and after we had partaken of a good breakfast (for the inn was well enough of its kind, but too prolific in live stock), we again put our cavalcade in motion, and proceeded by slow degrees towards the capital of the empire. We met with nothing worthy of note during the remainder of our route; for one town resembles another, one village its fellow. We

travelled over the same kind of uninteresting plain — along the same wide extended high road — through avenues of birch trees — jumbling over corderoys — and fearful that every crazy bridge over which we passed might uncourteously let us through.

We shut our eyes, morally and physically, till we arrived at Gatchina, one of the imperial summer residences. Here we breakfasted upon the third morning after we had quitted Witepsk. I had passed two nights in my calêche, for nothing could persuade me again to attempt a leathern sofa.

We now got upon a regular turnpike-road, the first which we had met with in Russia; and such is the contrast between rolling along a smooth surface and dragging through sand or mud, or jumbling over corderoys, that the natives say, "Une fois sur la chaussée et le voyage est fini."

It was about noon that we first got a glimpse of the imperial city, as we wound down a hill about ten miles distant from the capital. It was neither a pleasant nor cheerful feeling which this glimpse inspired; there was nothing of that sensation which the sight of a village spire never fails to cause, when, after an absence of some years from home, we see it peeping from out a neighbouring copse. If the idea, therefore, that we had arrived at our destination did not create that warm and comfortable feeling, nor that home-felt satisfaction which similar circumstances do or should inspire, so this want was not compensated by that overawing grandeur which sometimes swallows up all minor feelings. Here we

were, descending an eminence, and below us, situated or sunk deep into an immense morass, the city of St. Petersburg.

The magnificent *chaussée* over which we passed was enclosed between two rows of stunted trees — for here art is great, and nature little; a gilded spire sprung up from the remote extremity of the perspective avenue; large, huge, shapeless buildings stretched themselves unsystematically over large flats of ground.

The right wing of the city is bounded by a monastery, the left by masses of barracks. There was nothing imposing in the view from this point; and the state of the atmosphere did not serve to dispel the gloom which by some fatality overshadowed us.

The ground was thickly sprinkled with snow; the clouds hung black over our heads; an occasional gleam of sunshine succeeded to a shower of hail; but the curtain was immediately drawn over, and the huge black mass which excluded the sunbeams threatened to burst, and pour down its contents in a semi-fluid form. The day was dreary in the extreme — comfort seemed to say, farewell.

As we approached the city the wooden habitations increased on each side of the *chaussée*, which they bordered at a distance of about a hundred feet from the avenues of lime trees which enclose the road. The external form and physiognomy of these tenements at once proclaimed that no bearded guests could possibly dwell therein.

Neat in appearance, fronted by little gardens en-

closed by palings, full of shrubs and flowers, and accessible by a wicker gate, — such is the habitation of the German colonists, a class of people who formerly enjoyed great privileges in Russia.

In order to induce foreigners to reside in his newly created city, Peter the Great granted land to such as would build habitations upon it and cultivate it. A colony of Germans soon took root, and formed a distinct race of people from those by whom they were surrounded.

They are recognisable at first sight. The female of the species, and by far the more important personage of the two, is not unlike, under the circumstances in which we will place them, a New Forester driving her cart to town on a market-day. So is the colonist seen to toddle along the high road, driving her own vehicle; and no unseemly figure is she. She has much of the Dutch build — the *gute Frau*, with round bulkheads and protuberant stern, the two extremities equipoising each other. She occupies all the front part of the cart: there is room for no one by her side. She is of the same width as the bench upon which she sits. She could not accommodate a foot passenger, if even she felt disposed to do it. Her dress is grotesque; but not unpleasing. The head is covered by a closely fitting wadded cap, which takes in the ears and a part of the pole of the neck. It leaves the forehead well exposed, save for its own covering of jet-black hair, which, forming a broad band in front, allows its curling extremities to twine round the ear, and then hide themselves under the

cap. One of those genuine, good, sensible, and moral woollen shawls, which defy all intrusive glances, covers the neck and shoulders: its tapering ends tie round the waist.

Over this presides a thick blue cloth spenser, and the main is protected by a partycoloured woollen petticoat; blue worsteds cover the legs, and thick shoes enclose the foot and ankle. There she sits in front of her cart, gee-ho dobbin; nor cares she for the winds or storms which heaven may pour upon her. In her cart are deposited milk pails, butter pans, and egg baskets; and strewed over the bottom are apples, turnips, &c.

Our worthy colonist is, in fact, a market-gardener's wife, or of the same class as we find them in the New Forest,—a race which, I am afraid, has much dwindled away in late years. Goldsmith foretold their destruction, and sang their requiem. Such as I have painted her in outward form, many such did we find on the road as we approached the city. Two bronze figures grace the entrance gates of a large building, situated on the banks of the great canal, which embraces the whole town, and is named Canal d'Enceinte. These two Cretan bulls guard the entrance to the cattle market, which is situated close to the barrier at this approach to the capital. Town gates there are none, except in the form of triumphal arches; but each entrance to the town is furnished with a bar and piquet; and hard by is a station-house, mounted by Cossacks and soldiers of the guard. One of the former demanded our passport, which

having received, he rode off at good speed; the toll-bar was raised, and we rolled into the town itself. Now within the gates — nay, in the heart of the city — still it seemed that we were not there. Streets wide, spacious, and paved in the centre; broad flags on each side running in right lines, intersected at right angles, circled by five canals; immense stuccoed private dwellings; huge public buildings, monuments, churches with gilded cupolas, all in clean shirts, or as of yesterday's creation; carriages rolling, carts crawling, people walking; and still we felt that we were not there, as far as external impressions influenced internal sensations.

The streets are so wide that the inhabitants who move about are lost in space; and no buzz nor din of men assails the ear. As we rolled along we approached an immense pile of scaffolding. Turning the nearest corner from the same, Falconet's celebrated equestrian statue of Peter the Great attracted our sight, and then we were at home. Lodgings had been prepared for us in the adjoining street, and we were welcomed at our door by our much-esteemed Parisian cook. He apologised that he had only a *diner bourgeois* to offer us, for he had received no official intimation of our arrival in St. Petersburg. We found that every thing had been previously prepared — nothing which could contribute to our comforts had been neglected, and we sat down to table in the metropolis of Russia as we should have done in our abode in the Rue St. Honoré. All seemed to be in its place — the charms of novelty were absorbed by the pleasurable feelings

of having accomplished our journey so comfortably. We were at home in a new country, and in a strange city. It was dusk; the windows were closed; the rooms were well furnished; the same servants waited upon us, and the cook had done his best, and we rose from table; and where were we? Fatigued by our journey, we retired early to rest, and when we awoke in the morning then all seemed new.

NOTE.

It will be found that the attempt to introduce Protestantism into Poland wholly failed, and that the mass of the people never countenanced it. The empire began to crumble to its foundation about the period when Socinus first promulgated his doctrines in the city of Cracow. Nothing is more characteristic of this people than the little unison of sentiment upon this important matter; and the triumph of the Jesuits was never more complete than in the overthrow of this innovation. Previous to the time of Hosius the clergy submitted in all things to the legislative authorities, but he and his followers put all authority under the feet of the Church; and the Arians, Socinians, and Unitarians, who formed by far the larger body of dissenters, declined as rapidly as they rose. Hosius has made use of this forcible expression, "Strip the Church of its pomp and pageantry, and of its external garb, and its doctrines will become as the fables of Æsop!"

Catherine's protection of the dissidents was one of the most cunning strokes of her policy for the dismemberment of the kingdom. The work of Count Krasinski on the rise and fall of Protestantism in Poland is well worthy of perusal.

BOOK II.

THE SOJOURN.

" Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act."

SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST IMPRESSION OF PETERSBURG. RETAIL DEALERS. PETER THE GREAT'S EQUESTRIAN STATUE. PROFESSIONAL PROSPECTS. POLICE. EFFECTS OF NEVA WATER QUESTIONABLE. CALL UPON GRAND DIGNITARY. DR. W———.

THE desire of immediately becoming acquainted with the external appearance of things, and especially of a city in which I was probably to pass many years of my life, was naturally too strong to allow that I should defer recognising the location beyond the time employed in the distribution of the rooms at home, and in the unpacking of trunks, sorting of introductory letters, and arranging trifles. This being accomplished, leaving other little necessary occupations to the females, I left the house to reconnoitre, not knowing exactly what direction to take.

In reconnoitring a strange town, I generally lose myself purposely; and in endeavouring to get out of the labyrinth, I see a great many things, and meet with many adventures, which, were I to steer a more direct course, I might not do.

I had not proceeded far along the same street in which I had taken up my abode, without observing the immense number of small retail shops which occupied the ground floors of almost all the houses. I shall halt here to mention a circumstance which

will afford a fair insight into the nature of things, and convince of the exactitude with which all orders are executed in Russia.

These small retail shops to which I allude display a painted board immediately over the entrance door, upon which figures the bill of fare of their internal contents. This is for the information of such as would be no wiser were they to see, in printed letters, "Tea, Coffee, Tobacco, and Snuff" in the same situation; for there is a very numerous class of people in this metropolis who have not enjoyed the advantages of that kind of education which teacheth to read: — happy mortals! Upon these painted boards doth every eye discover the cone of a sugar-loaf; a small chest of tea; a water melon with a slice cut out, to show its black pips, and prove that it is ripe; a bundle of cigars; the four aces out of a pack of cards; a canister of snuff, *cum multis aliis.* It is impossible to put more into the same space. The Wakefield picture is a fool to it. Underneath is the dealer's name, and, immediately succeeding, the number 1., &c. These numbers require explanation. The Emperor Paul possessed a creative power: when he said "Let a thing be done," it was done. Now as these shops are all licensed, so, for convenience and order's sake, the Emperor said "Let them be all numbered No. 1., &c." Thus the order stood "No. 1., &c.," no doubts, no supposition, no subterfuge, no construction of original intention allowable; the first shop in the street is 1., &c., the second 1., &c., the third, and so on, all 1., &c. It was not allowable to suppose that

the "&c." should extend to 2, 3, 4, and that each should have a separate number. Such, according to the phrase ever in a Russian mouth, "was not ordered."

I shall hereafter take an opportunity of stating, that by the literal adhesion to the meaning of the word "se-chass" (immediately) an English merchant was dragged out of his bed at two o'clock, P.M., to be married to his intended, whose single blessedness was intruded upon at the same hour by the appearance of a police officer at her bedside. They were brought together at this hour by imperial ukase, and the rights of matrimony were performed according to the liturgy of the Church of England.

To return to the little shops (Lavkas). It seemed to me that they were superabundant, and that the supply of such articles as they retailed much greater than the demand could well be: when I found, however, upon inquiry, that they were all receptacles for stolen goods, I said with the man in the play, "This accounts for it!"

I soon recognised the huge pile of scaffolding which had attracted our notice as we turned round the corner of our street the preceding evening; and in front of it rose to view the equestrian statue of Peter the Great, which now stands in the plain at some distance from the Isaac cathedral, which was then enveloped in scaffolding. How long this *chef-d'œuvre* of Falconet will remain in its present location is very difficult to imagine; for the city of St. Petersburg does in somewise resemble Penelope's web — it is

always doing and undoing; and were Catherine to rise from her tomb, she would not believe that her grandson ruled over the same city. This statue has been long and justly celebrated. The pedestal is formed of a solid block of granite, shapeless as when transplanted from its bed. It was an insulated rock found in an adjoining wood—hewn out of no quarry. It originally stood in its new situation as it had done in its old, a rough, moss-covered rock; but the Emperor Paul thought that this savoured too much of *sans-culottism*, for he hated the Jacobins; so he had the exterior cleaned and rubbed smooth, which much deteriorated it. Upon this mass is Peter the Great seated on horseback, with one hand stretched out and pointing significantly: the horse paws the air with his fore legs, the hinder trample upon a serpent crawling on the rock; hence the surface should not have been polished, for serpents are not found in such situations.

The whole weight of the statue is poised on the horse's tail, which is fastened in the stone. The statue is of bronze. Upon one side of the pedestal is inscribed appropriately—

"PETRO PRIMO,
CATHERINA SECUNDA."

I am not a Benvenuto Cellini, and will not commit myself by saying more upon the subject; but I contemplated the statue then, and have done ever since, with wonder and admiration.

Leaving the cathedral on my right and the statue

on my left I had to traverse a wide plain, than which nothing can be more uncomfortable in appearance, in order to gain what was at this time almost the sole, and is still the most frequented, street of the capital, viz., the Neffsky Perspective. It takes its name from the Monastery of St. Alexander Neffsky, the patron saint of the town.

In crossing this plain, the Admiralty is to the left. It is an immense building surmounted by a gilded spire, upon which is a ship in full sail, said to be of real ducat gold, serving as a vane. I have my doubts as to the purity of the metal: the wind would have blown it down ere now, and what a windfall it would have been.

A gravel walk bordered by lime trees, which are determined not to rise beyond a certain height, nor to bear more leaves than they please, takes the name of Boulevard, and encloses three sides of the Admiralty. Those who have seen the Boulevards in Paris, and felt the impressions which they produce on memory's page, can find no resemblance between the two. The Neva flows before the grand façade of the Admiralty, and ships of leviathan magnitude are launched into it from its docks.

A stroll down the Neffsky, and a cursory view of some large private hotels, and of a few public buildings, occupied all the time which I had devoted to this morning's survey. I returned home, therefore, with ideas sufficiently exalted as regarded the grandeur of the city; but I felt not, and I never have felt, that I could feel myself at home. There was a cold

and cheerless sensation in the present, the prospective had nothing encouraging to me. I know not what it was, but there was a presentiment of ill, which was not to be dispelled by the gilded spires and cupolas, and I returned home with a heavy heart, not unobserved by those who recognize every anxious look, and interpret every expression of feature. All was arranged in our household economy, and the evening passed off not uncheerily, for the past and the present furnished ample food for conversation. Could we have shaken off an unhappy presentiment, we had little reason to be sad. We were under very favourable auspices, enjoyed the first protection, and had a large pile of recommendatory letters.

As regarded my profession, I imagined, in spite of the old curmudgeon's hints, that a brilliant career was opening to me, having been assured by one of the grand dignitaries of the court that when I was once established in St. Petersburg, I should have more visits to pay daily than fourth parts of an hour to pay them in.

"Vous ferez plus de visites, mon cher, qu'il n'y ait quart d'heures dans la journée." All this, together with the circumstance of being well lodged in a fashionable part of the town, was far from discouraging.

A friend, a Greek too, and a colleague, informed me, when at Cracow, that if I could get a gratuitous supply of forage for my horses, I might therewith be content. "Vous allez vous établir, mon cher, dans une ville où votre réputation est déja faité."

I had been at court, had almost prescribed for a grand duchess, had practised successfully upon the heroes of Schoomla and Varna, and had been liberally remunerated for my services. "Je ne crains pas pour vous," said one of my warmest friends to me. Still the words of that vexatious old Englishman sounded in my ears, as the chimes to morning mess, — "you cannot trust them, doctor, you cannot trust them."

The character of condescension and complacency, which I had established for myself at the Austrian barrier, when I furnished the custom-house officers with all the information which they required, and much more even than they demanded, was again put to the test by the inquisitorial nature of the reception which I met with at the foreign office, whither I was obliged to repair, to submit to certain interrogatories, and go through certain forms in order to obtain a ticket of residence (*permis de séjour*) in the capital.

There could be no question of the validity of a passport furnished by the governor of Lower Arabia. Still a variety of questions were proposed. For what purpose I came to Petersburg? What patronage I could boast? What was the name of the great man to whom I was recommended? Whether I had obtained a diploma from the medical academy a *sine quâ non* of permission to exercise my trade? To these I gave full and satisfactory answers without indulging in any of those witty observations which passed current at the custom-house of Braunau.

My permit was given me for the consideration of about ten shillings; but the tax has been since raised

to a guinea; and as it is necessary to renew this permit annually, so it is, in fact, a pole-tax upon strangers.

I had during my sojourn at Odessa obtained, through high interest, the autocratic permission to practise my profession freely throughout the Russian empire, without being subjected to the pains and penalties of a medical examination by the professors of the medico-chirurgical academy. The temporary nomination of physician to the Grand Duchess before mentioned exonerated me from this ordeal, to which all must submit who desire to exercise their art in Russia, and this without consideration of any foreign credentials with which they may be furnished. This is no more than is required by all the faculties in Europe, and no more than is right and equitable. It was requisite, however, that I should wait upon the minister of the interior, and upon the president of the academy, to whom I must produce my British diploma. I was graciously received by both; and was informed by the minister, that orders had been received from Odessa, which directed that every facility should be afforded me, and I was dismissed with a gracious bow, and with the injunction *vade auxiliare.* Two points very essential to my future plans were thus accomplished, viz. the permission to reside in the empire, and the privilege of using such means as should make such residence desirable.

My name was registered amongst the free practitioners, a very necessary step, for without its accomplishment no druggist would have ventured to make up my prescriptions. I soon found the necessity of

this registration; for I was obliged to prescribe for my little girl, who was attacked with very obstinate diarrhœa.

Her complaint was immediately attributed by the natives to the influence of Neva water, and I was desired not to interfere with a salutary process, for I was told that all strangers were attacked in a similar way soon after their arrival in St. Petersburg. This was the explanation of the cause and effect, to which I opposed the fact, that of four persons of which my family then consisted, one suffered only in this way. As to the influence of Neva water, I had already learned from Dr. Granville's analysis, that no purer stream than this ever flowed; and that so far from exercising any cathartic powers, the extraneous matters, which is held in solution, were of an astringent nature. I was sceptical upon this matter also from the circumstance of having heard the same effects attributed to fluvial influence in other countries. When a stranger arrives in Paris and complains of some slight stomach derangement, he is told that it is the effect of the Seine water, a slight tax which he must pay to Paris. At Vienna the Danube is accused of the same misdemeanor, and perhaps all of them are innocent of the charge preferred against them. Travellers, whilst in motion, are often under a certain degree of febrile excitement, producing a contrary effect, and as soon as they settle into a state of rest often experience a reaction in the system. The difference in food, confinement in close rooms, and a variety of incidental circumstances necessarily attend-

ant on any material change in the habits, are more to be blamed for such derangements, than the supposed influence of pure river water.

An Englishman arriving for the first time in Paris may attribute to the Seine water what is, in reality, due to large potations of sour French wines. In Petersburg, cabbage soup, kvass, and some other national dishes may be the real culprits; and, upon due reflection, I believe that these complaints are more attributable to too great abstinence than to too free a consumption of Neva water. I have been consulted by many travellers upon their arrival who were labouring under diarrhœa, and, upon strict investigation, I found that many so affected had never tasted of the pure stream, and that not more than one stranger in ten was ever so attacked. I could in most instances refer the disease to more active causes; and were I to suggest a specific against it, I should propose a free use of the pure element in place of its many substitutes.

Armed with sufficient authority I could now be ready at every man's call; but these calls were few. It is true, that the Court was absent, and the nobility not yet arrived from their country estates. The town, however, began to fill sensibly; and as many of my Odessa friends had already made their appearance, I determined to deliver some of my letters.

I had during my stay in the provinces made the acquaintance of one of the highest dignitaries of the court, a man of great riches and of high moral reputation. I had been very successful in my treatment

of some of his domestics, who had suffered from agues, and I had dressed his finger for a whitloe.

It was he who gave me the greatest encouragement, and held out the highest prospects of success. He promised upon his arrival in Petersburg not merely to put his finger, but his whole body personal, and a huge mass it was, under my care. There was no mistaking him, for he spoke very loud, and always repeated his phrases twice over. I determined to wait upon him, and drove to his hotel; and as the same valet whom I had treated for a fever opened the hall-door for me, I found a ready admission into the presence of his Excellency. I passed through richly furnished saloons, halls of statuary, and picture galleries; and finally arriving at a small cabinet in a remote corner of the hotel, which contained for all furniture a couple of invalid chairs, a small table, and an old torn leather sofa, made my bow to the great dignitary of state, who sat bolt upright upon the same, enveloped in a fusty morning gown.

"Bon jour, mon cher — bon jour, mon cher!"

'Twas the same voice — I could not be mistaken in my man.

"Who told you that we were in Petersburg?"

"I had made inquiries, and, finding that your Excellency was arrived, I lost no time in waiting upon you."

"Vous me faites honneur — regardez mon doigt — c'est votre ouvrage. Mon médecin me dit que cela va bien, car j'ai deux médecins ici, l'un pour moi-même, et l'autre pour mes gens."

" Mon cher, avez-vous vu ma femme? Venez avec moi."

He conducted me through the same suite of apartments, halting occasionally to make me admire a statue, or picture, pointing to the gilded cornices, and painted ceilings; then looking down upon the *parquet* floors, and squeezing my arm, observed, " Vous autres Anglais, vous aimez la propreté, moi aussi. Ma femme, voici le Docteur," and we entered her boudoir. — " Adieu, mon cher. Il faut que je m'habille."

The old Countess, now in her dotage, was seated on a sofa, doing precisely nothing, and looking as if she expected visitors.

She raised her eyes towards a picture of which she was herself the heroine, and in which she appeared taking off the armour of Potemkin, in her twentieth year, being then a perfect beauty.

It reminded me of David's picture of Venus disarming Mars; but she was far superior to the goddess as represented by that artist. She turned her eyes from the portrait as her servant entered with a cup of chocolate, and, accosting me, said, " Connaissez-vous ce remède? c'est la chocolade d'Imsen." I replied in the negative. Visitors were announced, and as I rose to depart, she said to me in a kind tone, " Soyez content, mon cher, soyez heureux."

It was the last time that I saw her; she died soon afterwards. She was one of the many who outlive all enjoyment, with whom pleasure has ceased to please.

Those who were immediately about her person

found themselves in the situation of Madame de Maintenon, who bewailed the difficulty of trying to amuse a man *"qui n'est plus amusable."*

I made some more calls, and delivered several letters. Some of the parties encouraged me to hope for success, as most of my countrymen had found it in Russia. Others made me polite bows, and received me standing. Some would not receive me at all.

The following morning I was summoned to see a patient, who dwelt in the same house where we were residing, but whose case was hopeless. It was the Count's house-steward. He was sinking into his grave under accumulated ills: he had passed through the hands of several of the faculty, but had never tried an English doctor. There were hopes in this last resource, and I was requested to see him the following day in consultation with Dr. ——.

In conversing with the patient's wife (who spoke French, was a good looking young woman, and but lately married to her husband, a man of great respectability, but well stricken in years), I found I had to deal with a long protracted illness. The case had been given up by several, and the physician whom I was to meet in consultation had been called in on the ground that he had cured a friend afflicted with the same complaint. This, as I found in the sequel, was a most common mode of procedure in this country.

"Well, how do you do to-day?" says the friend to the patient. "What says your doctor? He does not seem to understand your complaint. I will send

you my physician, who cured me of the same disease; nay, indeed, I was much worse than you are."

Catching at a straw, the sufferer is persuaded into assent; and as there are many friends, so are there often many physicians: for each insists upon introducing his *protégé*.

The Princess ——'s pulse was felt by fourteen different physicians the day she gave up the ghost.

I had not long to wait before my colleague was introduced. He was a good-looking man, in the prime of life, a great talker; and he piqued himself upon his knowledge of the English language.

"Well, my dear, this patient must be bled." I opposed the practice. "Well, then, my dear, I do not consent with you. We must a third for consultation have."

To this I had no objection. The Doctor retired, squeezing my hand, and saying, "Good bye, my dear." He was nicknamed *le Grand Seigneur*, from his irresistible propensity to bleed all his patients.

His future career was singular. He was a man of good education and of good property, but so eccentric that he at length broke the line and became insane. His insanity manifested itself in a singular way; armed with a cudgel he paid his daily visits, and applied his stick severely to the shoulders of such of his patients as had not implicitly obeyed all his orders. He was arrested in his career, put under confinement for a time, and recovered. He again moved in society, and practised his profession as formerly; and all fears of his relapsing into his former state had well nigh va-

nished, when of a sudden, as he was dining with some friends in a *cabaret*, he rose from his seat, and, seizing a bottle of champagne, unceremoniously broke it upon the head of the waiter, who fell down weltering in his blood.

The man was mad, but the physician was in his senses; for no sooner had he perpetrated the injury, than he set about repairing it *secundum artem*. He procured compresses and bandages, bound up the wounds in most surgical style, and put the patient to bed. Having performed this duty, he called for writing materials, and addressed a long epistle to a great personage explanatory of his conduct.

CHAP. II.

BRITISH FACTORY. A CELEBRATED NATURALIST. PRESENTED TO THE HEAD OF THE FACTORY. PREJUDICE OF RUSSIANS AGAINST EATING PIGEONS. BRITISH HOSPITALITY. LACK OF CONVERSATION. ITS CAUSES.

SOME few days after this consultation, I was visited by my travelling companion. He called, as he passed through Petersburg on his way to Odessa, to which he was returning as a happy Benedict. He informed me that my prospects were excellent. "The English hail your arrival with much satisfaction. Have you made their acquaintance?"

I then recollected that my old friend in Odessa, whom I disliked more and more as his presentiments realised themselves, had given me, when I took leave of him, four letters of introduction to merchants in St. Petersburg. As they were unsealed and intended for my perusal before delivery, I augured but little good from their contents. They ran, as commonplace introductions do — "Be so good as to show the bearer any civilities in your power, which I shall be happy to reciprocate at any future opportunity."

I showed their contents to my *compagnon de voyage*, and when he had read their superscriptions, he said to me, emphatically, "These people are not all of the same class." The English society, he continued, is

distributed into certain circles, which preserve their own boundaries. As the Russians, by the nature of their laws are divided into classes, so have the British in a great measure adopted a similar arbitrary division. There are three classes of society; and each confines itself to its class. Although there is no real difference, as regards the fortunes or education of the individuals, still the assumed differences create a great deal of that ill-blood and jealousy which prevail in all small communities, and which is more characteristic of the English than of any other people.

Thus, Mrs. A. will confess that she should much like to become acquainted with Mrs. B., who may be a charming woman; but as she is not in the first class, it would not be proper to infringe upon established rules and customs, and so she dare not invite her to her tea parties.

How was I to distinguish between these different shades — to which was I to belong? Such were questions which a newcomer must necessarily put to himself.

"You will, no doubt," said my friend, "from the nature of your recommendations, be well received by the *Factory*," which I immediately, and as it were instinctively, felt inclined to suppose must be the first class.

The term was familiar to me, from the knowledge that my uncle played an important part in the factory at Lisbon; from which same body, it may be remembered that I hoped for protection, when I quitted Edinburgh in 1819 to seek a warmer climate.

"Is there a British factory in St. Petersburg?" I exclaimed, elated at the sound of my own voice, as I uttered the *word.*

"What, never heard of the Factory!" retorted my friend; with a look of condemnation and surprise, that made his face appear turned upside down.

He was about to explain; when a note being delivered to him from his bride, he made a few unseemly grimaces and retired.

I was, however, soon *au fait* at the state of things: and most gratifying was it to me to ascertain, that so large a body of the English have established and maintained, for two centuries, the sterling character of their country in this empire.

Their charter dates from as long a period as the days of Sebastian Cabot, who was shipwrecked, and finally got into the port of St. Nicholas, which subsequently became that of Archangel. Petersburg did not exist in those days, and Archangel was, in reality, the sea-port of Moscow. Here, too, was the British Factory first established; but it was always characterised by a pliancy to circumstances, and it removed to St. Petersburg when that city rose into importance.

Some of the original mercantile houses are still to be found in Archangel, which carries on a large trade with the British empire; but here is the soil in which the factory flourishes, and it may be considered the patent Factory of Europe. It now includes within its corporation almost all the merchants of respecta-

bility, and as regards its moral conduct, it is almost without a spot.

If there be any thing reproachable to this immaculate body, it is a fault, I should say foible, fault is too strong a term, viz. that of presuming a little too much on its own merits. Hence strangers are sometimes surprised at the continual mention which is made in society, of the great respectability of the British factory; before they have had time to satisfy themselves of the truth of the oft-repeated assertion. Then surprise naturally ceases.

If Mr. A. overtake Mr. B. trudging to change, his salutation consists in saying, "Mr. B., we are certainly the most respectable body of merchants in Christendom."

To which Mr. B. replies, "Verily, you have well spoken." This forms the morning salute and the evening *salam*.

It is the form of oath administered to new members. The President, after a suitable exhortation, addresses the candidate much as follows: —

"Do you swear, sir (giving him the book to hold), to do all in your power to maintain the honour, and hitherto unblemished reputation, of that most superior body of men so legally constituted, the British Factory?"

To which the candidate answers, as he may already have done, or may have to do, to his bride — "I will."

The new member is then admitted, invited to eat some cold fowl and tongue, furnished at the expense of the trade, and immediately takes his seat upon

the cross benches, not as yet decided to which party he belongs.

Foibles are incident to human nature, forming exceptions to general rules; and some little irregularities, which may have occurred in Church and Factory, serve as a pleasing contrast, permitted perhaps to convince presuming mortals that nothing of human invention can be perfect, and that however near we may approach, we can never reach, the goal of perfection here below.

My friend soon returned, and having advised me not to be in too great a hurry to deliver my letters, told me that he would make me acquainted with a gentleman, in whose society I should find more pleasure than in that of the whole collective body.

"I will introduce you to a man whose personal appearance is not advantageous to him, but you will find that his mental qualities more than compensate for any external disadvantages; so come along, and judge for yourself."

I was conducted to the counting-house, where he was generally to be found in the morning; but the clock having struck one, he had already retired to his private room. The door was half open, and we entered without farther ceremony.

A little man, who was standing with his back towards the fireplace, bent forward at an acute angle, gradually raised his head and face to that position which Ovid makes as a distinctive character of the human race, when he says

"Os homini sublime dedit."

There was nothing sublime in the little man's shrivelled face, which was even more disfigured by a long black beard, for it was neither washing nor shaving day with him. His hair was black, and a cockatoo crest stood prominent on the crown of the head. There was an expression of considerable animation in the eyes, but nothing indicative of genius. The shape of the head was rather in the sugar-loaf style, and was a violation of all phrenological principles; for the owner of it had no right to possess the qualities he did, and of which there was no external demonstration. The rest of the body, being enveloped in a loose dirty morning gown, requires no farther notice. The apartment which he occupied squared well with its tenant. Large mahogany presses round the walls served to diminish the size of a moderately large room. An old chair, with two additional greasy cushions strapped on it, stood immediately in front of the fireplace. On one side of the same a long table, upon which were spread sheets of pasteboard, slips of paper, some dried leaves, an inkstand, a glass half full of water, a long pair of scissors, and an old metal snuff-box. Behind the table stood a narrow hair sofa, the two ends of which were piled up with books and pamphlets. A pocket-handkerchief and pair of shoes were lying upon it. In the window was a large microscope, a bundle of newspapers, a box of insects, a decanter half full of wine, and a basin of powdered sugar, and other sundries. At the farthest extremity a door opened into a bed-room, and a large black cat was rubbing its tail against the door, which remained

half closed. Such was the *entourage* of the man whom I immediately stamped in my own mind as a character.

My friend introduced me as a new arrival from Odessa, who intended to settle in St. Petersburg. The little man became immediately erect, held out his hand, shook his head, and said something in a kind of indistinct hollow laugh, which I could not understand; it was decidedly not encouraging. He turned round, begged me to be seated whilst he put on his shoes and gaiters, and proposed to introduce me to his partner. I had in the meantime just an opportunity of asking my friend if the little man were a member of the factory?

"Hush! yes — yes!" was the reply.

This immediately inspired me with confidence, and I awaited the completion of his toilet; when this was accomplished, and my friend had taken his leave, I followed him into the counting-house, and was introduced to ——, who received me very ceremoniously, and welcomed me to St. Petersburg.

There are times and circumstances which often place us in great dilemmas from the undefinable nature of the beings with whom we come in contact. We are in a state of uncertainty whether we are really addressing the individual whom we would address. It is a painful state, which fortunately does not last long. There are other moments when no doubt can exist as to the object before us. There is an instinctive impulse of cognition which says it is he.

When I asked my friend then, in a whisper, if the

little character were a member of the factory, I laboured under some uncertainty; when I was introduced to Mr. ———, panicstruck, I retreated a pace or two, and muttered to myself, "this is the factory embodied."

It would be in vain to descend into particulars in describing first impressions: they are only to be felt. I was in immediate contact with one of the most influential members of that august body, who received me courteously and kindly; and, after some commonplace observations, I bowed and took my leave.

I thanked my new acquaintance for this introduction to his partner, and announced my intention of soon paying him another visit.

Here my constitutional temperament was again excited. I was elated beyond measure, and hastened to communicate my excess of joy.

There is nothing more provoking than, when on the eve of disburdening our minds of something which we imagine to be important, we are diverted from our well-concerted plan by some jocular and ridiculous observation. Thus about to launch out upon the impression which the personification of the factory had made upon me, I was wholly discouraged by a sarcastic smile.

I could and would say no more; all my enthusiasm — all my wrought-up powers of expression — all the satisfaction, all the hopes of future success, — all dwindled down into the communication, that I had

made the acquaintance of an English merchant, who had received me very politely.

"I am glad that you have," replied ——; "and come now to dinner, but you will not have the pigeon pie which I promised you. The servant informs me that no pigeons are eaten in Russia."

"Eat them or not, they know how to pluck them," I replied (happy to vent my spleen in any way); "as I experienced myself, when the old Count —— taught me the game of piquet in the *intérieur*. But how not procure them for the table? Why, they abound in the streets — the court-yards swarm with them — they infest the corridors of the palaces — they roost on the Corinthian capitals of the public edifices. They are so tame that you may lay hands upon them in the streets; the carriages often crush them as they roll along."

"All so many reasons for not eating them. They are held in veneration by the natives, who consider them as emblems of the Holy Ghost."

I would not involve myself so early in discussions which might have given rise to misconceptions upon this subject; but resolved in my own mind to conquer all prejudices, and eat my pigeon pie in the sequel. We often count without our host in these matters. When we hear of travellers being obliged to conform to the customs of the countries in which they sojourn, we think that we should act differently under similar circumstances: what should prevent us, say we, from following our old habits, at least in all trivial concerns?

There is nothing more difficult than the accomplishment of such intentions. The lower classes, from whom we might expect obedience, are the least of all disposed to obey, or to yield in matters in which their prejudices are concerned; and, in illustration, I may observe, that I have never accomplished more than one pigeon pie since I have been in the country.

It will not answer, and the attempt is futile, to endeavour to conquer such difficulties, as ample illustrations will hereafter prove.

We had in the space of a short time a good insight into the nature of the society in which we were subsequently to vegetate; for it was one of those many contradictions which occur in human life, that we were to be on intimate terms with those with whom we were unacquainted even by name, and soon to lose sight of those with whom we have hitherto been upon terms of intimacy.

The British society, by which sweeping clause I include more than the factory, was to be considered at this epoch of our existence only in its social relations, than which nothing could appear more respectable, or more creditable to the British character. Composed of men, who, if not opulent, were all in easy circumstances, and who made valid their situations by a certain expenditure, it offered many temptations to a newcomer, who, if he could not immediately count upon putting their purses under contributions professionally, might well hope to grace their hospitable boards; and it so happened that in a short time we made the round of the society; and

the ircomfortable style of living, the luxury of equipages which most enjoyed, the elegance of the female dress, and the well-furnished tables, were not without their influence in lulling us into the idea that we had pitched our tents in a productive country.

It was at the hospitable board of my colleague that I had the first glimpse of the English aristocracy. I had been furnished with a letter of introduction to him from Sir Astley Cooper;—one of those lucky hits again which were so little calculated upon at the time, but which proved the foundation of my future career. Our host was at that period the first accoucheur in St. Petersburg, and had maintained an unblemished reputation in the obstetric art during forty years' residence in the country. He had presided at the birth of all the imperial children, had encouraged the Empress by his presence in the most trying moments, and an unparalleled success had crowned his endeavours. He possessed tact in the fullest acceptation of the term; and, arriving in the country at a period when medical talent was at a low ebb, he easily gained the confidence of the natives, and which, as far as regarded his particular branch of the profession, was maintained in its original force to the last moment of his sojourn among them.

His primitive success was due to accident.—Does accident exist?—He came to Russia under the patronage of the late Admiral ——, whom he had attended in London, and was introduced by the admiral's recommendation into the sick-room of a lady

of quality (how like romance this seems!). She was labouring under high fever, which in these days was treated by the German doctors upon the Brunonian system. A sensible, well-informed practitioner, which our colleague really was, rejected such modes of treatment, and insisted upon bleeding, as the most rational and probable means of success in this case. His proposal, rejected by all his colleagues, was accepted by his patient. She was bled, and recovered. This, as he himself told me, was the corner-stone of his success; from that time all went smoothly with him. He adhered to that branch of the profession, which best suited both his abilities and his pecuniary interests; was soon attached to the court, which introduced him into the first practice; and, after having toiled for forty years, was, at the period I mention, about to repose upon his laurels, and these were well gilded.

It was at his table that I first became acquainted with the English residents. The dinner was of a mixed character, as to cookery, — half-and-half, as the Germans say, — very good of its kind — *à la* Petersburg; a term I shall in future adopt for all nondescript kind of things.

It is requisite to give the bill of fare, not to have to return to the subject again, however grateful it may be. An English factory party comprises from twenty to thirty guests. The table-service is generally of English ware; some sport silver forks — napkins always on great occasions; the host and hostess sit at the extreme ends of the table, as in England —

these are the posts of honour; the table is covered with the dessert. Two tureens of soup find admission at the ends; these are succeeded by two kinds of fish;—that dish, *par excellence* characteristic of the English kitchen, viz. boiled potatoes, is handed round with every dish.

"Shall I have the pleasure of taking a glass of wine with you?" Generally after the soup this ancient custom prevails.

The fish gives place to a boiled turkey, or its equivalent, three boiled fowls, and a Yorkshire ham. This course, I may observe, is quite characteristic of a factory dinner. If any thing prevent this, it creates some sensation in the town for a considerable time afterwards. Some made-dish, *à la Française,* is the half-way house of the dinner. Hock and claret are then handed round. Two kinds of roast close the solid part of the banquet. As conversation has flagged during the whole time hitherto employed, sparkling champagne is served, with the hopes of enlivening it —forlorn hope. Then sweets, *à l'Anglaise,* apple pie and custards, plum pudding; a Stilton cheese in very aristocratic society; formerly a glass of Burton ale afterwards — but no longer allowed to come into the country. Dessert follows, — but *sat prata biberunt.*

The champagne is intended to sharpen the wit, but it fails. Here, I repeat, the customs of a country are not easily to be set aside, and that strangers submit to them *par force.*

What prevents a party of Englishmen, *Bacchi plenus,* from launching out into the same kind of

discussions and political disputes which they are wont to do at home?

Does the government prevent them? By no means; but the usages of the place do, and, as little conversation is indulged in at Russian tables, the English more or less follow the example of the natives. Hence there is no town where there is so little general conversation as in St. Petersburg. People assemble to eat, and not to talk. Hence the slang word among the British — "Who gives a feed to-day? Where do you feed?"

The English medical faculty consisted of about fourteen persons when I first arrived; of these, some were attached to the army and navy, others were free practitioners.

The principal English physician was attached to the embassy; he was a great favourite with the public; a man of mild and gentlemanly manners, with whom I always remained upon the most friendly terms.

As long as I was quiescent in the capital, and my name was only associated with foreign practice, civilities were showered upon me; but as soon as I unfortunately intruded upon private interests, or hunted upon ground which I had been informed was preoccupied, I gathered a host of enemies about me, who soon discovered a hundred deficiencies not observable at first sight.

There is no profession more open to the influence of party spirit than the medical. We have warm

friends and bitter enemies to contend with; the one as often injurious to us as the other, for the halo which emanates from a physician sets the circle in a blaze. He is thus exhausted between two fires, of ill-timed zeal and malicious detraction: — he may survive both.

As to the party politics of the place, I concluded that they did not differ from those prevalent in all small societies, where people having nothing to do occupy themselves with their neighbours' business.

The mistake which most people make, and which prevails throughout all ranks of society, but especially the middle classes, is, that they have not the courage to live for themselves. By this is not implied a selfish existence, or even the life of an anchorite; but I maintain that people sacrifice all comfort, all real enjoyment, all rational pursuits, to what is termed society. To hold what is termed the first place in society is the height of ambition of two-thirds of the middle classes. To enjoy that which affords him no enjoyment, to seek pleasure where it cannot please, to encumber himself with trouble and vexation — this is the mistake which he who aspires to hold the first place in society but too frequently makes. Thus the mortification of not having been invited to dine with ——, who gives a grand dinner, prevents him from enjoying a better, but more simple one, elsewhere. If his table-service, glass, china, &c. are not all as handsome as those of some neighbour,

who takes the lead in society, they are all so many causes of disquietude.

All the misfortunes of the Wakefield family arose from the desire to be what they were not intended to be, — to live for others' admiration instead of their own comfort.

CHAP. III.

ILLNESS AND DEATH OF THE EMPRESS MOTHER. AFFECTIONATE EXPRESSIONS OF THE PEOPLE. ARRIVAL OF EMPEROR FROM VARNA. SUBSTITUTION OF TENSES IN RUSSIAN LANGUAGE.

THREE crowned heads had graced the imperial chambers but a short time before my arrival in St. Petersburg. One of these had paid the great debt, and had sunk into the tomb of death and oblivion. The consort of Alexander was one of those of whom little was known during life, and nothing heard of after death. That they did not live well together was all perhaps that I ever remember to have heard spoken when her name was mentioned. That they should not have done so was to me any thing but extraordinary, who had lived in the same hotel in Paris where dwelt the favourite Sophy: but all this had degenerated into history before I arrived in the country.

I soon noticed a carriage and six, with imperial uniforms, gracing the streets of Petersburg, and reminding me much of the Orleans turn-out in Paris. "C'est la modèle de toutes les vertus, Monsieur." — Yes, it was she of whom the old Countess at —— had said thus much to me. It was the Empress Mother, rolling about in her carriage, and visiting the differ-

ent charitable institutions over which she presided. Her favourite establishment was the foundling hospital. Here were her children, for whom she made all sacrifices herself, and laid others under contribution. She was at this period nominally regent, during her son's absence in Turkey; but she had nothing to do with state affairs, though much pleased with this title. The Dowager Empress and *ci-devant* consort of Paul was the antipodes of the widow of Alexander. She was the idol of the people, and was known by every man, woman, and child. They looked upon her as something supernatural; and it is probable that she will yet figure in the calendar of female saints. I had seen her repeatedly as she whisked along in her carriage; doffed my cap to her as she passed, but cannot call to mind her features. I heard one day of her indisposition, and a few days afterwards of her death. Some paralytic affection had seized her. She was bled, but felt no relief; the lungs were paralysed, and she ceased to breathe. On her death-bed she expressed herself kindly towards the English residents, whose style and mode of behaviour had gained her approbation.

The people fell upon their knees, and crossed themselves, and prayed for her intercession for them above. She was exposed to view in a *chapelle ardente*. The multitude passed by and pressed to kiss her hand, as the last token and sign of submission and respect to that body of which the soul had passed away.

After having lain in state the appointed time of ceremony, her remains were deposited in the vaults of

the Fortress church, the place of sepulture for the Imperial family, since the time of Peter the Great. The interment gave rise to an unfortunate calamity. The church is situated on the opposite side of the river to that in which the corpse was lying. The winter season had set in; but the ice, sufficiently firm to allow the escort of the body supported by a few individuals, was not strong enough to bear the weight of a crowd, who, despite of all remonstrance and gendarmerie, would press upon her remains. The ice gave way, and many passed beneath never to rise again. Their fate was envied by those who considered their salvation sure, having died in such a cause.

The Emperor Nicholas had arrived only a few days before his mother's death. Varna had fallen, but the campaign was not terminated. Yushof Pasha had told his master the place fell by treachery. It was riddled through with shot. The death of his mother, to whom he was devotedly attached, shed a gloom upon the Emperor's conquests. The Viceroy of Poland, Constantine, came from Warsaw, to pay his last respects to his mother's corpse. He remained but a few days in the city, and, upon leaving the gates, he exclaimed, as he turned round his head, "Farewell for ever!" I did not see him; yet a little while and I saw his bier stand by the side of his mother's in the same chapel. It was not in life, but in death, that he revisited Petersburg.

Russia, then, which boasted lately of three, could only now boast of an Empress Consort; in whom, how-

ever, it might well glory, for peace and good will emanate as a glory from her head.

The Russian language is deficient in three tenses in a political sense; at least, it is forbidden to speak in the present, the past, and the future. To supply this deficiency, two tenses are made use of on all occasions, where the past and the future would occur in other languages. There are a paulo-post-future, as in the Greek, and a paulo-post-past, which only exists in the Russian. Thus it is not permitted to speak of any political occurrence since the time of Catherine. The past must only refer to Peter the Great. So with the future. Nothing can be mentioned which may occur, or be likely to occur, within the reign of the present Emperor and his immediate successor. It may be hinted that the successor of the heir apparent may prefer living at Constantinople, as a better climate than that of the present metropolis.

As to the present, nobody knows anything about it, so that I must not even touch upon the virtues of the Empress Consort.

CHAP. IV.

SETTING IN OF WINTER. PRECAUTIONS AGAINST COLD. CLOSING OF THE NAVIGATION. ICE FLOATING DOWN FROM LADOGA. SWINGING AWAY OF BRIDGES OF BOATS. CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING THE PROGRESS OF THE FLOATING ICE, AND EXPEDITING AND RETARDING THE CLOSING OF THE RIVER. TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE CITY. INCONVENIENCES RESULTING FROM THIS INTERRUPTION. COMMENCE PRACTICE. RUSSIAN DRAWING-ROOM. DEATH OF ——.

It was in the month of November, that the Empress Mother convinced the world of imperial mortality — a gloomy month in all countries, but particularly so in this. It is here the season when the navigation closes, when we bid a long farewell to the sun's genial rays. Upon a mean calculation, the ice floats down from the Ladoga and covers the Neva during the first ten days of November. It is an important and often remarkable occurrence. It gives the *coup de grace* to commerce, and lucky are those who have trimmed their sails ere this event takes place. They must otherwise be content to winter in Cronstadt, or else risk being frozen in, like the arctic navigators. The approach of winter is not so rapid but that certain appearances foretel it. The first fall of snow is considered by the natives to indicate that winter will set in about a month afterwards.

By the term setting in, is implied, that the floating bridges over the Neva will be carried away by the

masses of ice coming down from the Ladoga, and that navigation is no longer practicable. This is the great winter; the little winter comprises the period between the first fall of snow and this latter event.

This circumstance was predicted by Dr. ———, who called upon us occasionally, and gave his advice gratis on many particulars.

"Keep the hall warm," said the Doctor, "and thus prevent the cold air from penetrating, or you will never keep your house warm."

"If the Neva water disagree with the children, put a little cognac into it, which will correct its effects," for the Doctor entertained the vulgar prejudices respecting its operation on new-comers. I began to dispute upon the matter, but I found that the Doctor was a better accoucheur than chemist, so I dropped the subject. When he took his leave I followed him into the hall, and observed that his servant was waiting for him, armed with warm clothing. "Provide yourself with these as soon as possible," he said; "a large cloth mantle with sleeves, and big enough to envelope the whole body, warmly lined with fur; a pair of warm caloshes; a wadded cap which can cover the ears. Now," he added, as he was armed *cap-à-pie* himself, "now you may defy the cold." Had I implicitly observed his injunctions as to dress, I might probably have saved myself a most severe illness.

It is a mistake which almost all new comers make; viz. to brave the cold too long, allowing it to penetrate before they take measures against it. Now the secret is never to feel it. Take preventive measures;

arm against it; never let it lay hold: this is the secret worth knowing, and the natives do know it, for they are seen walking about in their furs to the astonishment of new-comers, who hardly feel the cold sufficient to warrant a great coat.

Heat breaks no bones, says a Russian proverb. The Russians also say, Wear warm clothing the first winter of your arrival, and you may do as you please ever after.

A few days previous to the closing of the navigation the weather assumes a deceptive appearance. The sun is bright and the atmosphere clear; there is a nipping and an eager air, and the spirits are light and buoyant. Scarcely any wind prevails; the river flows calmly along without a ripple on its surface; there is a peculiar brightness in the atmosphere, which pushes forth as it were its last rose of summer. It seems as if it would last for ever, as if spring were about to return, making a leap-year winter. The sun sets with a deep orange ray; the moon rises pale and silvery. The stars tremble in the firmament. The actual thermometric cold is about 10° of Fahrenheit. The nights are splendid, but colder than the days. The morning dawns bright and cheerful; the surface of the river is smooth and glistening. No swallow skims over its surface; no gnat dances in the sun-beam reflected from it; but, floating upon its top, is seen a thin pellicle of ice, which, resembling a film of suet, caused by pouring it when melted upon water, is called by the natives *sala.*

Now a long adieu to sun and sky. The clouds

lower; sleet and flocculent snow descend and sprinkle the earth; the thermometer sinks to — 25° of Fahrenheit, and the morning's salutation consists in the question, Have you won or lost by the bridge?

The slipping of the bridge of boats from the cables which confine it on both sides, and which are torn away by the pressure of the accumulated ice, gives rise to the English propensity of betting to large amounts. Soon after the first fall of snow these wagers commence. The average day of its departure from its moorings being about the 10th of November, scope enough is allowed for this amusement, and dearly is it paid for by those who, considering themselves wiser than their neighbours, calculate upon principles, and trust not to chance.

The large expanse of water forming the Ladoga is soon frozen over after the commencement of the frost, and, if there be no wind and boisterous weather, the ice acquires a considerable degree of thickness. It is soon, however, broken up by the wind, and then large pieces enter the river as it is continued from the lake. These masses perform a journey of about forty miles before they reach the city, and, by the constant collision which they meet with in their course, appear all in the shape of rounded masses of all possible sizes. Previous to their approaching the bridges, the latter are loosened from their moorings, to prevent their being broken into pieces by the force of the accumulated ice hurried down by the stream and pressing upon them, an accident which sometimes happens when the ice comes down in the night, and when the

watchmen are asleep, whose duty it is to guard against such accidents.

This transit of ice from the Lake Ladoga along the Neva to the Gulph of Finland is of longer or shorter duration, according to circumstances. It is much influenced by the direction in which the wind blows. If it be a side-wind, then small masses of ice are blown to one shore, and two-thirds of the river's breadth are free. If the wind be directly against the current, then insulated pieces float down, and several days will elapse before consolidation takes place. If wind and current coincide, then that which was one day a flowing stream will in a few hours present no other surface than a mass of solid ice. It is effected in this wise: at first small masses only appear in the river, such as are broken off from the edges of the frozen lake. These rolling slowly along, breaking up into smaller masses, and rounding off their edges as they float, find space enough for their transit in the breadth of the stream. As the lake breaks up *in toto*, larger masses, in shape of floating islands, move slowly along, for the current does not exceed three miles an hour. These occasionally arrested in their progress allow other smaller masses to insinuate themselves into the broken surfaces which the larger masses present, and resistance being made by the shores, so of a sudden does the whole mass halt and form one continuous surface. So instantaneously does this halt occur, that boats which are crossing the river are often arrested in the middle of the stream, not without danger to the passengers, who are obliged to get

out, and walk over masses of ice covering a flowing stream, through which but a few seconds previously they were paddled along. In attempting this some occasionally slip under the ice, and are heard of no more.

All communication is now necessarily cut off from the islands upon which different parts of the town are situated, and this interruption varies according to circumstances. If the frost be strong, then the whole mass is consolidated in a few hours, and boards are placed all across the river, to enable foot passengers to traverse, care being taken by the police that too many do not crowd upon a small space.

After some days attempts are made to replace the bridge. This is an arduous undertaking. It is necessary first to cut a wide canal through the ice, to allow free motion to the bridge, which is hauled into its place by ropes. This operation is frequently accompanied by loss of life, for the men who pull at the ropes are crowded upon one spot, and, the ice giving way, some slip beneath, and there is no salvation for them. Each man is provided with a long pole, by which he may sometimes prevent his head and arms from sinking beneath; and, as succour is near at hand, he may be hauled out before his blood be congealed by the cold element.

If a thaw succeed immediately upon the consolidation of the ice, the interruption is of much longer duration; for the incumbent weight necessary for their operations, being too great for the strength of the ice, would render all their efforts unavailing.

All these circumstances combined, and a variety of others, have led many to suppose that much of the public money devoted to a great many purposes, whose utility is not very manifest, would be much better employed in the erection of a permanent stone bridge across the river. The inconveniences arising from the want of such means of communication are manifold, and often productive of serious evil.

The island called Vasili Ostroff is very populous, and it is the transit from the main land to Finland. Several of the public buildings, as the Exchange, the Academy of Sciences, the Observatory, the Museum, the University, &c., are situated upon it. A large class of merchants reside upon this island, as house-rent is somewhat lower than on the *continent.*

When the bridge is dragged away by the ice, the communication can only be carried on by boats, which are not sufficient to carry a hundredth part of the live and dead stock across, which daily passes over the bridge under ordinary circumstances. The departure of the bridge is often very unexpected, and the fixing of the ice still more so; thus people cross over in boats, under the impression of being able to recross at pleasure, but, upon their return to the water's edge, they find that the whole is a mass of ice, and several days may elapse before any passage can be permitted.

In the mean time parents and children, husbands and wives, are often separated, to their great discomfort, — a circumstance always productive of inconvenience, and sometimes of scandal.

The great winter, then, is now established; and the novelty was not without its interest to us; nor had these atmospheric changes taken place without influencing our domestic arrangements. We had to provide ourselves with an outfit of winter apparel, no trifling expense to young beginners. It will be necessary for every individual, who purposes residing for any length of time in Russia, to purchase clothing to the amount of from 60*l.* to 70*l.* sterling. This is a moderate estimate, but the supply will serve him for ten years with proper care; and let no one, under false ideas of economy, curtail his comforts in clothing.

As to the ladies' dresses, I dare not venture to say more than that their husbands find them very expensive. We armed ourselves consequently against Jack Frost; and as it was a *sine quâ non* of procedure, we put up with it cheerfully.

I had now been domiciliated two months in the capital, had been introduced into most of the English families, had delivered all my recommendatory letters, and had been in reality very well received. During all this time, however, I had not been employed professionally, and began to imagine that I must have made some mistake, or have been buoyed up with hopes which were not to be realised.

The —— had arrived from Odessa, and given me a hearty welcome; he was anxious for my success, and took every means in his power to promote it. He invited me to his table, and introduced me to the first of the nobility.

I afterwards learnt to my sorrow, that he, too, had reckoned without his host, and had believed himself more influential in this respect than he was in reality.

To the observation of some few, who said that —— *avait amené avec lui un bon médecin,* it was replied by the many — *Oui; et il a amené avec lui un bon cuisinier.*

It was no mark of disrespect to be placed in the same category with such an artist; but unfortunately it was the general opinion that he knew more of the merits of a Cook than of a Doctor; and when he would hazard a word in my praise, he would be interrupted with — "Pshaw! *Mais votre cuisinier!*" This was a settler; so, in a little time, he ceased to sing my praises, and left me to my fate.

I had made, as I have stated, some acquaintances, but was still waiting to exercise my art, when I was summoned to attend an old Princess, whom fate had decided to be my first patient.

My readers may suppose that this was a much greater honour than it really was. The inhabitants of Great Britain, accustomed only to a Prince of Wales, and that only once in a way, may be startled with the term Princess; but they will cease to be so when they are informed that here they are as plentiful as blackberries.

A Russian Prince may have ten sons, all of whom will be princes; each of these may have ten, who will also be princes; and there being no right of primogeniture, the original property is divided hundred fold,

the fortunes are lost, and Princes* have been reduced to drive hackney coaches.

I had dined in company with her, who was so soon to be my patient, and she conversed with me in a very friendly manner.

She had been recommended to my care, as an old lady very fond of physic and physicians, and still more fond of any new arrival; and she was, doubtless, selected for my medical operations. She commenced by paying me some compliments, and spoke in high terms of the English, whom she preferred much to the French, even in their medical capacities. She had travelled a good deal in her youth, had resided long in Paris, to which place she was passionately attached; had published a novel in her youth, which she allowed to be very stupid in her old age; but she was a woman of good education, and not deficient in understanding. She invited me to her *soirées*, which were held once a week in the same room in which she slept, and which allowed of a sofa, and two card-tables at the most.

Soon after my arrival, she took me to a corner of the room, and complained of severe head-ache. "Ne faites pas attention à ma tante; elle ne fait que radoter," said an officer, who, turning his head from the whist table, discovered me engaged in conversation with the old lady. "Faites attention à votre jeu," she replied, "et laissez-moi parler avec le docteur." I found in reality that she was not joking, and pro-

* A Prince Galitzin was in reality a Jarvey.

posed to speak with her seriously, when the party broke up. In the mean time I played my rubber and made acquaintance with the lady of the house, for the old princess, who was a relation, resided in a couple of rooms upon the ground floor. This is quite *à la Russe:* half a dozen lodgers live in a private hotel. The family owner occupies the *bel étage*, or grand suite of rooms on the first floor; the ground floor is often let to small shopkeepers; and the second and third floors to strangers of large and small families. The object of a Russian is to make as much as he can of his house. A shoemaker may, and does sometimes, occupy the antechamber to the grand suite of rooms. What Lady Mary Wortley Montague said of the houses in Vienna in her day, I found illustrated in those of St. Petersburg in the present. The owner of this hotel was a lady of high rank; she spoke to me of her aunt, and asked me if I thought her case dangerous? I gave an evasive answer: she left the room soon afterwards. When the guests had retired the old princess commenced her attack in earnest: "Asseyez-vous, mon cher; que je vous consulte."

She informed me that her medical attendant had called in the morning, and had prescribed for her. She showed me the prescription. I highly approved of it. She begged me to write another. I remonstrated. She entreated to have something English. I refused. She again insisted, and fate, and nothing but fate, made me consent to her demand. I pre-

scribed for her, begging her at the same time to send again for her ordinary attendant.

I began early to appreciate the characters of the people among whom I was about to settle. The changes which took place in the state of the patient in the space of twenty-four hours had produced as many in the opinions of the attendants as to the talents of the physician.

"Docteur, je vous en voulais bien; je croyais que vous avez expédié ma pauvre mère."

"Comment; je ferai chercher monsieur dans les quatre coins de la terre; pour moi je n'ai de la confiance que dans lui."

"Trente-deux ans; quel talent!"

Such were the encomiums passed upon me as the patient recovered from her lethargy. I was extolled to the skies.

M——, in whose house the patient was residing, begged me to dine with her the following day. She wished to place her family under my care. I met with many guests, and some old acquaintances at table.

"Je vous ai dit cela, mon cher. Vous ferez plus de visités qu'il n'y ait quart d'heures dans la journée." "You are acquainted, then, with our new doctor?" demanded one of the guests. "Si je le connais, cela va vite avec lui," and he looked at me and then at his finger. I really thought that all was now right, and that the happy moment was arrived when I was to dash at once into practice.

Upon quitting the dinner table, which needs no

particular mention, as to any nationality connected with it, I again descended into my patient's room, and found her, as I supposed, convalescent. She talked with me for some time, and assured me that her case would do much towards establishing my reputation. She congratulated herself upon being what she styled its corner-stone. She was inquisitive about Paris, and intended to pay it soon another visit. She abused the French faculty.

She gave me some useful hints as to my plan of operations hereafter. "Ici, mon cher, vous trouverez plus d'ânes que d'ânesses." The conversation led to something about asses' milk. The animal cannot resist the cold of St. Petersburg. Some few are kept by the nobility; but they are taken great care of during the winter. Hence they are never used as beasts of burden.

The people themselves enjoy this privilege. "Mille remercimens," she repeated, as I took my leave; "vous allez faire la partie. Vous trouverez du monde en haut."

Upon returning into the saloon I found the ladies, each of whom had been placed by the side of a cavalier at the dinner table, all sitting together in one corner of the room. I say sitting, rather than talking, for I heard nothing above a whisper. The males were mostly engaged at cards. My old patron, the Count, was fast asleep upon a sofa. He awoke as I approached. "Vous faites votre siesta, monsieur; moi! point de tout: même quand j'étais à Malte (he was an old chevalier de Malte), où tout le monde dort après diner,

moi, je ne dormais jamais; moi, jamais!" He had been fast asleep for half an hour previously.

I was invited to play a rubber, but I refused, for it was my first *entrée* to a Russian drawing-room, and I wished to see how things were conducted there. Just as every where else, I found, with less talking and more card playing. Tea and ices; fruits, as pears, apples, water melons in slices, grapes from Malaga and Astrakan, preserves in small saucers, were profusely handed round: the rooms warm to suffocation, causing a great demand for potables; lemonade, orgeat, wine and water, and especially mead, seemed to be preferred.

"The Russians are fond of a drink called *imminya*," says one of our publishing travellers. It is to be explained otherwise. The mead, or other beverage, is handed to him who calls for it; the person sitting near him, when the glass is presented, being also thirsty, says to the waiter, "Imminya," *and to me also:*—a mistake worthy of those who publish as they go along. Among the guests seated at cards one character deserves to be mentioned. She was the most decided card player of her day; and her voice rose above the multitude as she scolded her partner most furiously. A black crape gown, worn at the elbows and polished from use, reaching from under the chin, descending to the feet, and enveloping the whole body corporal; such was the dress of one of the nieces of the celebrated ———. She was the worthy sister of the old lady who lived in the Ukraine, of whom honourable mention has been

made: and they had certainly been cast in the same mould. The old Princess, who was a very Mrs. Battle at whist, gave me a cold reception when I addressed her; she was intent upon her game — she hated all doctors — never took doctor's stuff in her life — and made me that kind of bow, which says "Begone!" Though one of the richest women in the empire, she lived as if in the greatest penury; her clothes were a nuisance to those who approached her, and she played for a sixpenny stake. Notwithstanding such foibles, she was good and charitable without ostentation. She proved in her latter years to be one of the few examples of those who do not evince "the ruling passion strong in death:" she changed all her habits, became profuse in her expenditure, wore fashionable clothes, was remarkable for the brilliancy of her diamonds, penurious in nothing, liberal in all things. She died very rich, leaving her property to a son, who, from his habits and character, might be called a real son of his mother, or what she was before she changed. The whole party broke up early. It was a Parisian *soirée* out of Paris.

I was summoned on the 7th of December, 1828, to visit my patient whom I had quitted in so satisfactory a condition the preceding evening. It was a miserable day; the clouds hung low; the snow fell in large flakes, driven about by a strong and cutting wind. In many parts the snow-drifts hardly permitted the horse to plough through them; not a soul was to be seen in the streets, except some miserable

sledge driver sitting athwart his sledge, and covering his face with his arms to prevent its freezing, an accident to which this class of people are very subject. The little light of day appeared not to be sent from the sky downwards, but to be radiated from the snow upwards: all was gloomy and ill-foreboding. Upon my arrival at her house I found her again comatose. "Elle était si bien hier au soir," said her daughter. Her complaint had degenerated into nervous fever. She died a few days afterwards.

I remained nearly six months after this event without any professional occupation, and this, fortunately enough for me, proved to be the only six months of leisure which I have enjoyed during my sojourn here; and this interval allowed me to insert in my scrap-book some observations on men and things, and sketch a few characters which presented themselves in the interim.

CHAP. V.

CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS. CHANGES IN MY PROSPECTS. ENGLISH CLUB. SKETCH OF ——: HIS SERVICES TO RUSSIA, ETC. THE POET AND FABULIST. SATURDAY EVENING AT MR. B——'S. BRITISH AMBASSADOR. GRAND RECEPTION OF THE FACTORY. INVITATION TO DINNER.

It is difficult to define exactly what is meant by fate and destiny; but that some genius does preside over our fortunes, I am ready to believe. As to the free agency of man, it involves so much metaphysical discussion, for which I have neither taste nor talent, that I must leave it in abler hands than mine; but that we are controlled by circumstances which we cannot control, and that we consequently often fail where we had hoped to succeed, and meet with success where despair seemed to stare us in the face, appears to me self-evident, at least as regards my history; so that, if I have any leaning towards fatality, it is on the chapter of accidents that I would found my creed.

My transportation to this empire was decided solely upon the promises, and upon the almost certain hope of making a professional career among the natives; and when the late Countess S—— said to me, when I quitted Paris, "Pourquoi, au nom de Ciel,

allez vous dans ce pays la?" I replied, in sure and certain hope, "Pour pouvoir bientôt retourner ici avec la fortune que je ferai la bas."

Every thing conspired to strengthen me in this opinion. The Prince assured me that my success was certain; and what better assurance could I require than that of a man so influential as himself, and occupying so high a rank in society?

All the Russians and Poles whom I had attended in Paris had spoken in the same terms of certainty; and judging, as I did, from the liberal manner in which they had remunerated my services, I anticipated an abundant harvest. As I journeyed along the road, towards my destination, the same hopes seemed to revive as the season advanced.

At Carlsbad I was promised a place at court, which, indeed, I considered essential, believing, with Touchstone, that not to have been at court was to be like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side. My sojourn in Cracow fed my hopes still more; and my progress through the provinces, until my arrival at Odessa, still fanned the flame. Here the climax, the crown of professional glory, was placed upon my head.

I was here presented to her Imperial Majesty and graciously received; nay, I was to attend one of the Imperial children professionally. "Depechez-vous; on vous attend avec impatience à St. Petersbourg," was the valedictory blessing of my numerous friends, upon my quitting the capital of the south.

Buoyed up with hope and certainty of a continuance of previous good fortune, I hardly inquired concern-

ing the English settlers whom I should find in St. Petersburg. Strange to say, I had never heard of the *Factory*.

What was it then but fate, chance, or destiny, which so thwarted my career in one sphere, to establish it in another and altogether unhoped-for direction?

I fell suddenly from the pinnacle of ambitious expectation, to climb by slow and surer degrees the tree of medical existence.

I had aimed at plucking the apples of the Hesperides, and found myself too happy in the possession of the Ribston pippins supplied at the hospitable boards of the English merchants. If my former expectations were founded upon excessive vanity, I must plead in my excuse, that most men will believe themselves to be what others designate them; and, if a certain degree of success corroborates the assertion, we can hardly be censured for acting upon an idea which has grown gradually into imaginary reality.

The English Club was originally established by some young men, who were in those aristocratic times (a century ago) excluded from the tables and society of the merchants. It soon grew into favour, and is now composed of some four hundred members, among whom about twenty English names may be with difficulty found. It still retains, however, the name of English Club, an epithet not so preposterous as may appear at first sight, for a fundamental law still in operation requires that of six directors chosen annually, two must be Englishmen, and one of these, *Treasurer*. It is the best organized establishment in the capital, and

enjoys many privileges above other establishments of the kind. Such has always been the tenour of its conduct, that it escaped the wrath of Paul, who shut up all the clubs throughout the empire. He insisted, however, that the name should be changed to *Society*, the term *club*, so often heard of during the French revolution, having displeased his ears. This has been the only infringement that has been made in its charter since its foundation. The members, who are elected by ballot, are limited to four hundred, and such is the desire of admission that there are some hundreds of candidates. The candidate must have a certain majority of white balls to be admitted; and in the elections the club has *sometimes* shown its independence.

Four times a week there is a public dinner; the other days of the week the members dine *à la carte*. The dinner, including a pint of wine, averages about four and sixpence. All kinds of refreshments are to be had at all times of the day. The annual subscription is about five pounds; the entrance money five pounds also. Members who do not renew their tickets before a certain day of the year are considered seceders, and cannot return again but upon certain conditions. They must be put upon the list of candidates and await a new ballot, or they may re-enter at any time by paying a fine of ten pounds.

One of the chief sources of revenue to the establishment is the tax which it levies upon playing cards. Each pack is sold to the players at three times the original cost; and in this way a sum of

1500*l.* is raised annually, which defrays the house rent.

Each member can introduce a visitor who has not resided for more than six months in the town. Hence all travellers find admission.

Saturday is the favourite day with the English, who at the period of my arrival mustered strong at table. I was introduced by a colleague a few days afterwards, and was so pleased with the establishment, that I requested him to place me on the list of candidates.

"You may become a member in ten years' time," he replied.

Very good, I observed; I propose living a hundred in Petersburg.

It so happened that chance favoured me, and in less than eighteen months I was myself a member.

The Russians, being a sober people, rise from table as soon as the last dish is handed round, and before the last mouthful is well gulped down. They disperse about the adjoining rooms to smoke, play cards, billiards, &c., or to read the papers and fall asleep.

The English form themselves into close rank, clear the deck for action, and place the port upon the board. Then they discuss matters as freely as if on English ground, without fear or restraint; and, when full of wine, find room for a bowl of punch. A truce to punch which is made with an infusion of green tea. I trembled like a leaf for two days successively.

"Allow me, Doctor," said my friend, "to introduce you to —— ——." A stern, hard-featured man, of striking Scotch physiognomy, held out his hand.

"Good God! are you the person of whom mention was made to me at ——? Well, I did you all the harm I could with his ——."

"To be sure you wrote something about n'est ce pas?"

"Je vous assure ——. Give me your hand. I did not know that you were acquainted with my friend there; point de tout. You are an Englishman. O yes, you have an English face. Niet Franzuski. O no. Yes, pon honour. I said all I could against you; I did not know you. Come, sit down; when did you come? No, I assure you. You speak German? Setzen sie sich — Sadetez. I can show you what I wrote about those young men who came out. Mr. ——, here is Dr. ——; do you know him? Well, had I known, but I thought. Come, give us your hand."

I was delighted with his candour, and squeezed his hand affectionately.

Thus did this new acquaintance hold forth to me in four languages alternately, leading me to suppose that the ill will which he had borne me was purely accidental.

Having finished his exordium, he returned to his task of explaining to a stranger who was near him all that had passed at the battle of the Borodino,

introducing the Emperor's name as freely as he well could — the late Emperor be it understood.

Unknown and unprotected, he was drifted from the coast of Leith on the shores of the Baltic. — A stripling of eighteen, he was transplanted to a foreign soil; and no exotic ever took deeper root, or shot out more luxuriant branches. Of hardy race, and of athletic build, capable of great bodily fatigue, his mind was also equal to bear up against most things.

Enduring, persevering, callous to all those manifold occurrences in life, and especially in public life, which annoy and wound the feelings of most men, he pushed on to the goal. He entered the Russian service at a period when English practitioners were at a great premium. His own medical education could not have been regularly accomplished, when he arrived in Russia. In those days education was a matter of secondary consideration; and it was to him, who could boast little or none when he commenced his career, that Russia was to be indebted ultimately for the establishment of a medical academy and the formation of a medical staff.

The Scotch pilgrim was in no long course of years to change his staff for a sceptre, and sit on the medical throne, as Archiater of the Russian empire.

At the period when I first made his acquaintance, it was difficult for me to ascertain what was his native language. It most resembled Scotch; but, in his ordinary conversation, he made use of such a Baby-

lonish dialect, that it was difficult to ascertain the root from whence all sprung. In the society of savans, he was fond of talking Latin: it was the language which he wrote the best, and which, I believe, he understood thoroughly.

Armed with Latin only, he must have commenced his operations; but he arrived in the Augustan age. The death of Paul brought him into notice; and the successor of Paul showered favours on his head without number, and without precedent. That he was deserving of them, for the good which he effected in his calling, his bitterest enemies—and no man ever reckoned more — will not attempt to deny. His countrymen have always reproached him with having done so little for them, or indeed, to speak as candidly as he spoke to me, for having ever done his utmost to oppose their success in Russia. Much is to be said upon this matter; and coming, as I fully do, under this denomination, I shall be considered to speak impartially, when I say that I believe he acted wisely.

A man's best dependence is himself; so must a nation's be; for what applies to one individual is applicable also to a mass of individuals.

Placed at the head of a faculty which could hardly deserve the name, he had not to ameliorate or modify it, but to create a new one. He found every thing in the hands of strangers. Nothing was valid which was not of foreign extract. He said to himself, I will work the raw material. Let it be done, and it was done. A medical academy was founded, inde-

pendent of the university. Of this institution he was the President.

It was completely under his direction, and his power was unlimited. He resigned the chair in his sixty-seventh year; not because he was too old, but because some changes were made, which curtailed his just, and I can boldly say, his necessary influence.

No monarch had more power over his subjects than he possessed over his inferiors. He could appoint and dismiss, nay, punish at his pleasure; and no man, from a full conviction of its necessity, enforced a more complete and entire subjection to his authority.

Inflexible in his purposes, and bent upon obtaining his ends, which would justify the means which he employed, there was no appeal to higher authority. Though possessed of the entire confidence of the sovereign, he never abused it for private interests. He never placed himself in a situation which could possibly risk a refusal from the high authority to which he addressed himself, for any specific purpose. No one could circumvent him; no one could gain the ear of his Majesty so readily as himself.

The medical faculty in Russia is placed upon the same footing, in regard to rank, as the military and civil services. The same undeniable principle obtains as in these: a man of inferior rank can never prevail, even in a consultation, over his superior. The cross of Vladimir must yield to a higher decoration. Medical rank and professional ability do not

march *pari passu;* the latter must yield to the former, even in common life.

Armed with such powers, and with the full privilege of exercising them, the archiater amalgamated himself with the spirit of the laws, and maintained his authority by means whose legality custom had long established. The reins once placed in his hand, he never slackened them. People are not willing slaves, not even Russians: but there is no medium of discipline; concessions demand concessions, and the ill consequences which arise from them. Hence men of the first abilities, of the best education, and of superior talents, bowed the knee to him. In his presence none dared to be seated unless he commanded them to sit. It was by this stern behaviour that he was enabled to carry his point and triumph over all obstacles. He organized a medical academy, created a medical staff, appointed all the officers, established a police; and so complete was his system of organization that he could, from his own constructed tables, place his finger upon any medical officer, wherever stationed throughout the empire.

His system presented this singular contrast to that of his predecessors, that whereas in former times all places of importance were filled by foreigners, he, a foreigner, sacrificed all to home produce.

Previous to his day no native Russian had been elevated to the rank of body physician. He broke down this barrier of foreign monopoly, and appointed a native to this honourable post. Upon a review of these and similar circumstances it will be evident

that but few of his countrymen found favour in his sight.

No British spirit could brook his contumely or support his discipline; and if he had relaxed an iota, he would have been no longer what he was; hence, from his accession to power, the English interest gradually declined. It was not that he favoured others, for favour was not in the catalogue either of his virtues or his vices. He advanced no man's interest to the detriment of others. But while he encouraged talent he demanded obedience, and he never committed himself in the most trivial circumstance. He had endured all the hardships of the French campaign, of which he talked *usque ad nauseam;* for the field of Borodino had been as glorious to his arms as it had been fatal to those of Napoleon. Here he first showed his sovereign the advantages derived from his labours; here it was that the bleeding soldier received succour in his distress; here it was that the Russian army first appreciated the immense advantages of a well organised medical staff.

He had few opportunities of practising his profession in private families, for his time was too much occupied with wholesale administration to allow of private practice; but fate ordained that he should attend the Emperor Alexander in his last illness, and that he should have the melancholy task of closing his benefactor's eyes. The odium attached to every practitioner who loses an illustrious patient was not spared to him on this occasion. He drank

of the bitter cup of calumny, and, for a time, his influence was on the wane. He was the friend of the deceased; and well as his services might be appreciated by his successor, he was no longer what he had been. Had peace continued for a longer period, he might have been compelled to retire into private life; but fortune favoured him at the very moment when she had threatened to abandon him altogether, and he again triumphed under the walls of Varna. His activity upon the occasion, and the superiority of his staff, consolidated for ever the good opinion of his sovereign; and, retiring from the field of battle, he found the couch spread with laurels upon which he was to repose. With this campaign he has probably closed his military career; and when we consider what he was, whence he sprung, what he endured, and what he achieved, we must look upon him as a hero.

Aware of what he had himself endured, he felt no inclination to spare others those labours which he had not spared himself, and he came under the category of many of his fellow-labourers, who, like the centurion mentioned by Tacitus, was "*Vetus operis et laboris et eo immitior quia toleraverat.*"

In private and social life he appeared to the greatest disadvantage. In spite of all the opportunities which he possessed of frequenting the first society, he remained the same uncouth, unpolished, and unrefined being, as when he first descended from the Grampian hills. No crucible, no furnace could separate the metal from the dross. No amalgam could be invented

which would leave the gold untarnished. Nothing could glaze the clay or polish the enamel. Hence he found but little entrance into polite circles. He offered a striking contrast in this respect to his predecessor, the favourite of Catherine, who was amalgamated with the Russian nobility. Unlike Sir Pertinax, who never could stand straight in the presence of a great man, great men bowed before him when he stood erect.

He possessed a fund of information, but knew not how to give it utterance. It was unconcocted and undigested. He was a proser of the first order. He seldom brought any history to a conclusion; for in its different ramifications he lost the original path in which he first set out on his journey. His yarns were of such unusual length, that few could wait till they were spun out. The battle of the Borodino was his favourite and eternal theme; and when seated at a whist table, and at the moment when his partner fully anticipated that he was about to make the odd trick, he would play him another by laying down his cards and chalking the plan of the battle over the smooth green cloth.

As my uncle Toby mistook the widow Wadman's question as to where he received the wound, and immediately sent Trim for the map of the place on which the bastion stood, so the slightest and most unintentional allusion would transport him at once to his field of glory.

We will now leave him to relate his exploits to the enchanted stranger who has not yet heard the twice-

told tale, and we will take a look and see what is doing in the adjoining rooms.

Hardly had I emerged from the dining-room, when my eye was powerfully attracted by a huge white-crowned mass, huddled up in one corner of a sofa. It appeared to me, as I caught an imperfect glimpse of it through the clouds of smoke which filled the room, to resemble a sack of flour. I soon discovered, however, that it was animate, and of the human species, of large size and dimensions. The head reclined a little upon one shoulder, the dishevelled grey hairs partly obscured the visage, the eyes were closed, but from the mouth and nose proceeded alternately a puff of smoke and a grunt in perfect cadence; nay, the oscillations of the paunch beat time to the other two.

When I had fully recognised its animal form, and took for granted its rational existence, a sudden thought struck me, and I said to myself, if my vision be not obfuscated, these are the shades of Walter the Doubter. The resemblance was striking: there he sat in the same position in which Walter was seen by Anthony Corlear when the latter arrived with the despatches; but Walter's pipe had puffed its last, this man's was still puffing. Turning round as I discovered an acquaintance, and pointing to the oscillating mass, "What is that?" I inquired. "Do you not know him? It is the famous poet and fabulist."

"Good God!" I exclaimed. "Is he asleep?" "No, what you observe is mere composition."

"He is composing himself to sleep," I imagined; and at this moment two little glow-worm eyes peeped out

of the dirt which covered them, and he gave his pipe to be replenished: — his musings could not proceed when this was empty.

Distributed about the other rooms were a variety of card-tables; the rest was all a club, where money is won and lost. An evening of Crockford's would probably exceed a whole year's revenue of this club's floating cash. If five thousand pounds be lost at a sitting it becomes a subject of conversation for a week afterwards; nay, there is danger of imperial reprimand.

Fatigued with the dinner, the punch, and the smoke, I was about to retire, and passed again through the room, where the genius of the spot had presided, in order to have one more look at him. He had quitted his post, and I observed him in quite another direction, busily throwing six ace on a back-gammon board.

I left the club for the evening, much pleased with an establishment which has stood the test of time, and triumphed over all attempts to set up a rival.

Although the club meets with no essential or detrimental opposition from rival institutions, yet, as far as the English are concerned, it finds a powerful opponent to its Saturday's muster in the parties of Mr. ——.

It was formerly a custom with many of the English houses to fix a day per week for the general reception of friends and acquaintances, and one invitation sufficed for the season. This, which had been prevalent in former times with many establishments, had dwindled

down at this epoch to be the custom of but a very few. Among these Mr. ——'s was paramount.

Every Saturday were the guests welcome to a good plain English dinner. In the evening the drawing-room was graced with the younger generation, and as the evening advanced it was fully occupied by dancing, card playing, billiards, &c., until the midnight hour approached, when a supper was served for the benefit of those who had not dined. The Sunday morning was never trespassed upon, for the English Sabbath does not commence, from the difference of time and latitude, until it is two o'clock in the morning with the Petersburgers. So all is right upon this score. The host received his guests with peculiar *bonhomie*, and no man was more at home, no man made his company more so than himself. To draw his character as it deserves would be difficult, and the more so for me, who cannot always (and who can?) avoid partiality towards those from whom we have received most special favours.

It may be said that Mr. —— did for the arts and sciences in this country what Sir —— did for the art of medicine. He introduced system and organisation. He taught the natives how to work; and his great and comprehensive mind overcame difficulties which had seemed insurmountable to his predecessors. He navigated the Gulf of Finland with steam before the experiment had been tried between London Bridge and Richmond; and he can, moreover, boast that no life has been lost from any flaw or fault in the machinery during a period of nearly forty years. His

great success dates from this period. He subsequently established saw-mills, sugar refineries, founderies of brass and iron; and none could compete with him. In spite of the efforts of government to establish manufactories after his models, there was something wanting in their economy and constitution. Sums of money were profusely lavished on attempts to encourage native industry. It would not succeed. One thing was still requisite to success, viz. Mr. ——'s head. Never did a man more for a foreign country than he has done for Russia. Those who have read the history of the Alexandrian column will find that when all things have passed away, when some future traveller shall sit down upon the banks of the Neva weeping the loss of a city swallowed up by irruptions of the sea, the people submerged, and their glory changed into an empty name, still shall this column lift its head above the waters, and upon that head shall be found the name of ——. Nay, that vast pile of building, that sink of millions, that never to be accomplished structure (if prophecy be true), St. Isaac's Cathedral, which has undergone so many revolutions, and is but now licked into form — upon the dome of this holy temple was the cross planted by the octogenarian hand of ——.

In spite of the manifold labours which occupied his mind, never in a state of rest, he could nevertheless devote his Saturday evenings to the entertainment of his guests; and a powerful attraction drew together a numerous assembly when I first arrived in St. Petersburg.

If the friends of Watt can boast of a monument to his memory, those of Mr. —— will hereafter point to a city whose splendour is attributable to the genius and operative talents of him whom I here introduce.

The British ambassador, whom I had seen at Odessa, had already arrived; and the English residents received a circular from their consul, the late Sir Daniel Bayley, intimating that his Excellency had appointed an early day for the reception of his countrymen. At the hour appointed we all presented ourselves at the embassy. The knight consul arranged us all in two rows, rank and file. The ambassador entered, and, followed by the knight aide-de-camp, marched down the middle, how-d'ye-doing to each.

This reception was soon followed by invitations to dinner; but as it was impossible to invite the whole community to one feed, so the dinners were divided into classes, which became the cause of much angry discussion among the good folks.

M. —— could not imagine why he was not invited to the first batch; and he would rather never have been invited at all, than have been invited to meet M. ——, who was not a member of the factory.

As the dinners, however, were very good, and it was undeniable that all the educated part of the community had been invited, so some augured that a revolution was near at hand. It did so happen, that soon after this period the barrier of classes was broken down; and as the society dwindled sensibly in numbers, so the remainder of all the three original distinctive classes amalgamated together *par force*.

Some did lift up their hands and eyes — a few did die of a broken heart — but it was a natural, and consequently more powerful than an artificial, cause which effected it.

The dinners were continued until all the inhabitants who had been presented had passed through the ordeal; and as all public dinners are stiff and silent, they usurped the name of a *feed.* The guests assembled at the hour specified — sat down to table — were mostly silent — rose after an hour's sitting, took coffee, and made their bow. If some felt disposed to remain a little longer, tea was immediately served — a polite hint to decamp; and did some burs still stick to their seats, the ringing of the bell and the announcement of some visiters pushed them forcibly from their stools, and the ground was swept clear.

This was the ambassador's dinner; similar to all such of all ambassadors who had preceded, and of all who did succeed; the only difference existing was in the qualities of the feed, or in the culinary talents of the artist. These were the relations which existed between the diplomatic and mercantile corps.

CHAP. VI.

WARMTH OF RUSSIAN HOUSES. CLOTHING. CONSOLIDATION OF RIVER ICE: VARIED FORMS OF. SHORTNESS OF DAY. NO ABSOLUTE DARKNESS. PETERSBURG BY MOONLIGHT. JUVENILE SKATERS. ICE HILLS. DIFFERENCE OF STYLE IN CALENDARS.

THE winter once set in, and the bridges replaced, so that the same communication may exist between all the parts of the town as heretofore, the different amusements which characterise the climate commence by degrees to come into action.

As in England, and as said to be most peculiarly characteristic of Englishmen, some observation respecting the weather enters into the usual salutation of friends and acquaintances; so here, the positive degree of cold forms a common item in the daily rencontre.

As in other countries clocks and time-pieces are considered indispensable pieces of furniture, so here two thermometers are equally indispensable to the comfort and convenience of the inmates of every house. The one, attached to the outer frame of the double windows, which are also universal in this country, marks the external cold; the other, suspended to a wall, or placed in ornamental form upon a table in the drawing-room, marks the degree

of warmth within doors. The scale of Réaumur is the one used in this country, and some hundreds of thousands must be manufactured in the capital; for not only is every house supplied, but often every room in the house is furnished with them. Upon quitting the bed, the first step is towards the window, to ascertain the degree of cold without, by which many movements of the day are to be regulated; and those who take pleasure in meteorological observations are provided with register thermometers, by which they not only ascertain the degree of actual cold, but learn what it has been during the night; for there are generally a few degrees of difference in the night and day temperatures. This transit from the warm bed to the freezing window is not made through cold space, as it would be in England, making the reader shiver and shake at the very idea; for the drawing-room, the parlour, the hall, the stair-case, and the bed-room, are all of the same temperature in a Russian house. The Russian does not undress in an ague fit, as in a bed-room at Christmas in England; he does not jump into bed and smother himself under a heap of blankets, to bring on the hot stage, nor does he rise in the morning with any idea of finding the water in his jug frozen. His bed-room is warmer in winter than in summer; and instead of adding to the number, he generally abstracts a blanket in the winter season from his bed.

As he finds the degree of cold marked by his thermometer externally, so does he understand how to

clothe himself when he issues from his warm hall-door.

There are three degrees of comparison in the warmth of clothing. The schenelle, or warm mantle; the bekêche, or English great coat, lined throughout with warm fur; and the schube, or large mantle wrapper, lined with a coarser fur than the bekêche.

If it be possible to see through the panes of glass, which are often covered with a fanciful coating of ice, the state of the beards and mustaches of the people passing along the streets indicates pretty well the degree of temperature; for when the frost is severe, the breath congeals upon the chin and cheeks, giving to the points of the hairs, the whiskers, and the beards a truly venerable and sacerdotal appearance. Then it is necessary to make exit from a room which in winter should have a range of temperature from 14 to 16 of Réaumur, with warm and comfortable clothing.

Although the positive or thermometric cold must be the standard for all these operations, yet it is in this climate especially that the difference between cold and the sensation of cold is so thoroughly distinguished; for the same degree which is tolerated with impunity in other regions is insupportable in this. Let not the inhabitants of temperate climates suppose that Russians are inured to cold, and brave it with impunity. It is precisely the reverse; neither the natives nor strangers can support it; and so far from being reconciled, or inured to it by habit, every successive season renders them more susceptible of it.

The fact is, that the natives do not themselves brave it; they defend themselves against it; and this is most apparent to strangers, who, upon their first arrival, as we have elsewhere remarked, see the Russians (with no little surprise) muffled up in their furs, whilst they find their ordinary great coat sufficient to keep them warm. Many fall a sacrifice to such fool-hardiness; for the cold penetrates insidiously, and saturates the system — thence arise catarrhs, fevers, and often *subitæ mortes.*

The sensation of cold and positive cold are in this part of Russia very different things. Strangers cannot support the same degree of cold here as in England, under the same circumstances. We should risk our lives were we to clothe ourselves in the same way at the setting in of winter here as we should do in England, although the thermometers may mark the same degree of cold in both countries.

On the other hand, and corroborative of this assertion, the inhabitant of St. Petersburg, who migrates to the south, cannot support the same clothing, *cæteris paribus,* which was requisite to his comfort at home.

Wind and moisture act in the same way here, in increasing the sensation of cold, as elsewhere.

When the ice in the river is sufficiently consolidated to allow of carriages to roll over it, then different roads are traced out, and these are enclosed between artificial rows of trees, to prevent the carriages getting out of the regular track in the dark, and falling into holes, or encountering eminences,

more or less of which are always produced by the manner in which the loose masses of ice first form themselves into a continuous surface.

It is impossible to describe the varied appearance of the river's surface when the masses of ice begin to halt. In some places it is so smooth as to allow of skating even from the first, in others it is thrown up into all possible shapes and masses, resembling from a distance the inclined tomb-stones in a church-yard; here a high wall of ice, as if of artificial workmanship, runs for some hundreds of feet in a straight direction, like a Holland dyke, and, by its very side, a portion of the river, where its current is rapid, remains exposed to view, throwing up volumes of frost smoke. These varieties, inequalities, &c. are mostly, however, soon removed from the sight of the eye by the falls of snow, which cover all over smooth as a blanket. It is to avoid these impediments that roads are marked out by trees, for carriages which cross the river in dark nights.

We understand the meaning of the word darkness in this country; and I would, nevertheless, prefer obscureness, as a word of more accurate signification. Candles are lit up at half-past two P. M., and one cannot shave by daylight at ten A. M. in the month of November; and yet no inhabitant of Petersburg can appreciate the terms, "dark as pitch,"—"I could not distinguish my horses' ears,"—"I could not see my hand,"—all terms, and not exaggerated ones, expressive of the darkness of a night in England.

At no season, not even on the shortest day, does such darkness prevail. The ground, covered by a bed of snow, reflects its spangled light; the clouds are high above, and few in number; the stars shine bright in the firmament. It is true that this half-obscure serves for no purpose, as far as the economy of artificial light is concerned; but it is equally true that here we do not appreciate the meaning of utter darkness.

The moon, the moon, — the light of Sylvia, how she streams upon us for ten successive hours, and mischievously bites off our noses in the winter months! — for cold and moonlight are then inseparable. He who hath not seen Petersburg by moonlight hath something yet to see. Yes, it is when the moon is seen climbing over its domes and minarets, that one is reconciled to the idea of a deserted city.

It is this separation of the inanimate from the animate which gives it this peculiar interest. Dazzling as it may appear, lit up by the beams of a meridian sun, its magnificence then involves the idea of its population; but this in no wise tallies with the magnitude of its buildings, so that the admiration of the grandeur of the one is checked by the insignificance of the other.

But when, in the dead of night, when all may be supposed to be asleep, — when the mind may imagine that the noonday bustle shall be worthy of the inanimate structures which now shine resplendent in the softened light of the watery moonbeam, — then, left to solitary contemplation, free from the influence of any outward impression which may destroy its

fairy and ideal form, then the city of the Czars offers a spectacle which perhaps few or none can equal.

It has then something of antiquity in its appearance. Its colossal buildings lit up by the reflected moon-beam, we see but their form only, without having sufficient light to scan their features. The buildings may be of stone or marble, and rival, for aught we know, the Eternal City in their age.

Viewed from an elevation, extending along a wide extent of horizon, and flanked by massive buildings of monastic form, the town rises with its gilded spires and spangling cupolas from out a level plain. We see not by the faint moonlight, that the intervening spaces between these large structures are not filled up.

The wide and straight streets allow not the eye to reach the tapering perspective point in the distance. Some bridge or object interposes ere the long alley dwindle to a point. The surface of the ground is one white spangling carpet. The river flows not to the sight: the voice of the boatman is not heard, and his oar plies not. Some solitary chime indicates the hour. The moon descending in her course, leaves some tower in the shade. All contributes to heighten the feelings of admiration, which this hour inspires. The day breaks, and dispels much of the illusion, revealing that to be but brick and plaster which to our midnight contemplation appeared stone and marble. Now time and duration vanish — the whole but of yesterday's creation, and nothing which guarantees futurity. The imagination, which had deceived itself into a past, is now disenchanted. The

light of day discovers plains and wastes in the centre of a habitable city. The inhabitants thinly scattered or lost over a wide extended surface, fail to enliven its streets. And what say those edifices to us which form its grandeur? None of the *vis admonitionis in locis* — the *sine nomine saxum,* — the history of a century — a town which we see upon the stage, called into existence by Harlequin's wand, which can again say depart — still a great city — the triumph of art over nature, and yet in its cradle.

Skating is not a favourite amusement with the natives: it is attended with some personal inconvenience and unnecessary trouble, and so finds no favour in their sight. The *labor ipse voluptas* is not appreciated by them, or they construe the phrase backward, making a toil of a pleasure.

The British youths take advantage of the first frost, and inclose a field of ice with trees early in the season. This they water nightly, till the whole presents a smooth and polished surface. Here is a scene of much juvenile mirth and dexterity. The skaters add the game of ball to the amusement, and each with crooked stick bandies it about and follows it on fleetest leg.

This skating club is composed entirely of youths, who cut their capers on the ice for hours together, arresting the attention and exciting the wonder of the passers by. Two men are continually employed in sweeping away the snow, and watering the surface, so that the amusement is attended with some expense. Boys resist cold better than adults, for

the caloric is generated more rapidly in youth: hence they escape the danger, which is connected with this pastime, viz. the inaction of the time employed in taking off the skates and changing the dress, for they cannot skate, as may be easily imagined, enveloped in fur cloaks.

They wear caps and thickly wadded jackets; nor is it an uninteresting sight to see the urchins proud of their independence, and daring their elders to noble feats.

Leaving the juvenile race to their frolics, we may here introduce the more adult pastime of the Russian ice hills. Those who have frequented Tivoli and Beaujon in Paris will easily understand the construction of these inclined slippery planes.

As soon as the ice has acquired a certain thickness, of about a foot English, it is cut out of the canals, and the slabs are placed upon an inclined plane of boards, which rise gradually in form of a hollow segment to different heights. The slabs of ice are made to join as closely as possible together, and between the interstices water is poured, which acts as cement and holds them all together. The whole surface is also bedewed with water, so that it soon forms a smooth and equal plain.

A stage is built at the summit of the ascent, from which the car is launched, and which glides, with impetuous velocity, down the slippery path.

It stops not at the foot of the hill; but once in full speed it bears its rider along the surface, which is called the run. The stands and runs are double, placed opposite to each other: the latter are so much

on one side as will prevent the cars coming in contact, so that two parties may set off from the stands at the same time and meet half way upon the parallel runs. There is some tact necessary in conducting the cars. When a stranger sees a cavalier go down upon his little sledge or car, he says to himself "any fool can do this;" but his first essay convinces him that he cannot accomplish what the fool does so easily. It requires practice. The sledge must feel the rudder; the body must yield to the right and left to maintain an equilibrium, as it descends rapidly down the plain; and a hundred little things are accomplished by practice, which no description can render intelligible. Hence the debutants are hurled from their seats, bruise their limbs, and leave evident signs upon the ice of an injured proboscis; whereas those who have had much experience, can cut capers with their sledges, as if they were skates. They can assume all postures, sitting, kneeling, lying on the back or face, and giving to the sledge a spiral direction as it descends.

If the amusement of skating be confined entirely to ingenuous youth, not so this truly Russian pastime. It is recommendatory moreover for its social character; the fair sex join in the amusement, for an experienced cavalier can take down a lady on his lap and hold her tight between his knees.

Thus parties are formed, and invitations to meet at the ice hills are as numerous as those issued for the drawing-room. The belles and beaux of the first water crowd to these resorts.

What greater pleasure for a young, innocent, and amorous couple than thus to glide smoothly down together—be it only for a while! With what ecstasy the lover hears the half-suppressed sigh of fear, as the fair one first finds herself in rapid motion—with what care does he press and hold her fast!

This amusement is also one of nocturnal observance, and the hills are illuminated fancifully for the occasion. Bands of music enliven the scene, and refreshments encourage to new exertions. An ice hill pic-nic is the phrase of invitation. Much as the natives enjoy this recreation, foreigners excel them in enthusiasm and take to the sport *con amore*.

Besides the public ice hills, which grace the skirts of the town, the children establish theirs in the courtyards of many of the private houses, and no better exercise or preservative of health can be found for them at this season; for they will not walk for walking sake—some amusement is necessary to give a gusto to the bodily motion. Here are to be found girls and boys tumbling over head and ears, scrambling and bustling, and vying with each other in all the feats of the game, for they make it such.

The German and English children seem to delight most in this amusement. Some few Russians may occasionally patronize it, but they are not fond of hardy feats in childhood; hence one of the causes which deprives them of the rosy hue of health. It is healthful exercise, and parents do well to encourage it.

We were fast approaching that season of the year

when the difference of style made itself manifest in no very unpleasant shape to English residents. Hardly should I have been aware of the existence of two styles, but for the circumstance of receiving simultaneously two invitations to eat mince pies on the thirteenth and twenty-fifth of December, the two Christmas days of the two calendars.

This was an advantage, which appeared to me to compensate for the trouble of putting two dates at the head of each letter, and puzzling continually about the corresponding days of each style. Two Christmas days and two New Year's days, and both kept in the English style of hospitality, were advantages which I did not anticipate when I left Paris. This is not all. I happen to have been born on the last day of the year, and birthdays are fêtes with the English in Petersburg, so that I have the additional advantage of two birthdays annually.

Such an addition to merry meetings is, however, dearly paid for; and the copious repasts, the sedentary mode of life, and the closeness of the rooms, are more formidable enemies to the constitution than all the frost and snow of a Russian winter. Hence, probably, from too free indulgence in the good things of this world, as such are often denominated, from the sudden transition from a wandering to a stationary existence, and from neglect of the advice of the natives to procure warmer clothing, I suffered from general indisposition which lasted several months.

In other respects, as regarded my household, I had reason to be content. We were much pleased with

the reception which we met with generally from our countrymen, who treated us with great hospitality.

It is not generally known, perhaps, that the Russians owe the continuance of the old style to the polite behaviour of Peter the Great towards England, which was one of the last countries to adopt the Gregorian calendar. He would not anticipate her on this point, although the neighbouring kingdom of Poland had set Europe the example.

When England did adopt the new style, Peter the Great slept with his fathers; and no monarch since his time has been able to overcome the prejudices of the Church on this head, manifold as the inconveniences must be of double dates in an empire which now adopts both modes of reckoning.

Cassanova gives an interesting account in his memoirs of a conversation he held with the Empress Catherine upon the propriety of her introducing the Gregorian Calendar into Russia. He met her in the Summer Gardens, and, as he observes, found her ready primed, and *au fait* at what was to be the subject of their conversation; for Catherine knew that all kinds of knowledge are as purchaseable as other conveniences, and she had always those about her capable of furnishing her with as much as she wanted for any particular occasion. She admitted that the error existed in the old mode of computation, and that it would be desirable that unity of style should exist among all European and Christian nations; but then she observed, "when we confess and know our error, and find that no other blame can attach to us than a

slight mistake in the division of a year, it is better to put up with such an inconvenience than risk doing mischief by its removal. What would my subjects think of me, were I to publish to the whole of my empire, that on a certain day of the year I curtailed all their lives by eleven days? Such an act would be considered the most tyrannical one of my reign, and dreadful consequences might ensue. As it is, we know our error; and, in our political communications with other countries, all our papers from government offices bear two dates, the old and the new." Upon Cassanova observing, that "almost immediately the calendar would be twelve days behind-hand*," she replied to him that "they were prepared for it, and the Synod had reported that the circumstance would not interfere with any church fête or saint's day." After much animated discussion, in which Catherine appeared to great advantage, Cassanova made his bow and retired. He had been prepared to meet with a woman and an empress, but he found that he had caught a Tartar.

* It was towards the close of the century that this interview took place.

CHAP. VII.

NEW YEAR'S DAY. RECEPTION AT PALACE. MASQUERADE. SETTLING OF ACCOUNTS. INHERIT PRACTICE OF RETIRING COLLEAGUE. TWELFTH NIGHT. INCREASE OF COLD. BLESSING OF THE WATERS. PREPARATIONS AND ERECTION OF TEMPLE UPON THE FROZEN SURFACE OF THE RIVER. FATAL RESULTS OF EXPOSURE TO COLD. BAPTISM OF ICE. BISHOP OF NIKOLAIEFF SACRIFICED TO RELIGIOUS ZEAL. PREPARATIONS FOR CELEBRATION OF CARNIVAL. CATCHELS. FÊTES. HORRIBLE CONFLAGRATION.

THE commencement of the new year is hailed by all with joy and satisfaction: and, if we trace the cause of this feeling, which vents itself in the common demonstrations of greeting and congratulations, we shall probably attribute it to a renewal of hope.

Our passions, feelings, and affections, our fears and hopes, all partake of a certain arbitrary arrangement; and as what is not material in form has, like space, no real boundary, so we impose upon it the limits which confine matter: hence the division of time is as necessary to the moral as to the physical man. The revolutions of the day and night, and of the seasons in general, impose upon man certain moral revolutions, which, if they have once taken root, cannot easily be eradicated.

He distributes his ideas into times and seasons, and

they will, and do, partake of this arrangement; hence May and June, and Monday and Tuesday, become realities of the human mind.

The impress lasts long after the power which stamped it has ceased to act; hence the black Monday of the schoolboy is not eradicated throughout life.

This division of time is less arbitrary than it may seem at first sight. It is a providential source of comfort to suffering mortality: it is the sustenance of that hope which springs eternal in the breast; and without which physical existence could not be endured.

Our common expressions place this in its best and truest light, in whatever sense they may indicate the reality of the feeling.

He to whom the morning light brings no relief, cries "Would God it were evening!" in hopes that the night may be better than the day has been. The little tradesman, who counts his profit or loss at the close of each week, hopes that the next Saturday night may be as good or better than the last. The merchant utters the same expression as he balances his monthly ledger: and the whole race of mankind sum up all their hopes in the chances of a new year.

This holiday is the most considerable one in the Russian calendar, and enjoys this speciality above its associates,—that it allows a very large mass of the people to see and approach Majesty.

"You will come and see me this evening I hope," said the Empress to the American minister; "I ex-

pect a snug *little party of twenty thousand.* I shall expect you." These apparently popular proceedings are some of the strongest means which despotic governments employ to separate the mass of the people from the middle classes and attach it to the throne, and thus annihilate the combined powers of the two.

Upon this occasion the great halls are thrown open, and upwards of twenty thousand persons promenade through the palace. The Imperial family, and all the dignitaries of the court, display the pageants of royalty in all their splendour; the people march round the throne; the emperor descends, and passes down the ranks, which form on both sides to allow his passage; he bows to all, and says a few words to some.

This holiday, for what reason I know not, is designated the masquerade at the palace. It is, perhaps, that, as no one wears a mask, all are supposed to do so—*lucus a non lucendo.* A domino is requisite for such as do not sport a uniform, but this is an apology for a court dress.

The Easter Monday ball at the Mansion House will afford those who have not been in Petersburg a very tolerable idea of this festivity. There are refreshments, and a scramble for them too in both cases. The squeezing, hustling, elbowing, shoving, toe-treading are the same: but now the essential difference;—your servant to whom you committed your fur clothing when you entered the halls of state is not to be found where you had desired him to

be found — first, because a servant never obeys orders literally; moreover, he thinks he can amuse himself better elsewhere. He has decamped from his post where you placed him, and sought a neighbouring gin shop, whilst you are bawling out his name in the corridor, anticipating the final necessity of remaining there half the night, trusting that some friend will come to your aid, and give you a cast in his carriage, — you at length hear his responding voice, and are too happy in the circumstance to think of any investigation into his conduct.

How long you may have awaited this means of exit is doubtful; there at all events must you have remained, for you could not have ventured ten paces with impunity in twenty degrees of frost lightly clad, and no fur cloak to protect you. Had you risked an exit, you would have remained in the plain before the palace, like Lot's wife, bolt upright,

" Yourself your murderer and your monument."

It has happened that the master's furs have been stolen from the drunken valet, and the former has perished from the effects of exposure to the frost.

Squeezing, pressing, jostling, and hustling — an uncommonly disagreeable smell in the warm rooms — starving with cold on your exit — a sight of ermined Majesty, this is almost the sum and substance of the palace masquerade on the first of January.

The new year is not to be treated lightly either. It is a period when benefits are conferred, when crosses and decorations are lavishly distributed, when

old grievances are forgotten, old acquaintances renewed, and last, not least, when debts are sometimes paid.

To the medical practitioner in Petersburg it is a particularly interesting period, for it is his rent-day. Physicians are, generally speaking, engaged to attend families by the year; and although the commencement or termination of a medical year may fall upon any of the months in the calendar, still the greatest proportion will fall upon the first of January.

It is then that he may receive from his Russian patients a diamond snuff-box, or a pair of pearl ear-rings, a gold watch-chain, a bracelet, a pair of silver candlesticks, a silver sugar-basin, a heap of old coins, a gross of green spectacles,—in short, a stock in trade of trinkets. Let him not always hope for hard cash; he will be disappointed if he do. If he, an Englishman, depend upon his countrymen he may not be disappointed in his expectations of a fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five pound note, and let him be thankful for it. Upon the present occasion I neither received one nor the other, but I hoped that I might do so the following year, and so I did, and I still hoped for better things the next, and so each successive year was to me a cause of rejoicing in the renewal of hope. If I received, however, but three-halfpence in cash, I had at least half-a-crown in promises; and the 1st of January, 1829, was a memorable epoch in my career. Now it was that the professional scale turned in my favour; now it was that I was to receive succour from an unexpected source; now it was that

Fate triumphed over plans and systems; now did she maintain her authority, and laugh to scorn those who pretend to be independent of her influence.

It was doomed by fate on the 1st of January, 1829, that the celebrated Dr. —— should give up practice and retire to England, having previously introduced me to the greater proportion of his patients. Here were hopes then of a better year, nay, sure and certain hopes; and that I may not again return to this subject, which can interest none but myself, whom it interested very materially from this period, and during the remainder of my sojourn in Russia, I may briefly state that I have practised upon a moderately extensive scale.

As these extracts are from common and not from professional life, we may say, "No more of that."

Le jour des Rois — twelfth night — gambols — plum cakes — drawing for king and queen — *la même chose partout.* Those who have maintained *qu'il n'y a plus d'enfans,* would diverge less from the truth did they assert that there are none but such. O Alfieri, what truth is in that sentiment — *L'uomo e una continuazione del bambino!* — children all our lives!

The 6th of January, answering to the 18th of English style (the twelfth cakes again), has more importance attached to it than is comprised in the evening's amusements. In the first place, it is a landmark along our winter's road: it is one of those hopeful periods to which we look forward. By this time the days are sensibly longer; we do not burn candles at three P. M., as in the month of November:

the sun shines with a brighter light; it does not look so much like the moon at mid-day as during the last two months. More bipeds are seen in the streets; and although, to quote a couplet, viz.

> " When the day lengthens
> The cold strengthens,"

still, in spite of this truism, as soon as the waters have been blessed, the worst of the winter is over. This operation is second to none in importance as concerns this day.

A fortnight previous to this epoch we may observe rising in a corner, situated between a wing of the Admiralty and the north-east angle of the winter palace, a small temple. It is formed by piles driven into the river where it is shallow: upon these is a floor of planks, and the sides are built up in octagon shape; the roof is formed of lattice work. Paintings of religious character grace the external building, which, when complete, has the appearance of a summer-house in one corner of a garden. A hole is left in the centre of the platform, which will admit of the rites being performed on the flowing stream. The cannons fire, bare-headed priests in long processions sing their hymns; and the emperor and the imperial suite are present upon this occasion. Crowds of people of all ages and of both sexes follow in the train. The waters are blessed, and the multitude disperses. The old women fill empty bottles with the water, which, after being blessed, immediately becomes holy, and preserve it during the remainder

of the year. It is serviceable in many complaints. A bit of Good Friday bread dipped in this water and given to a child who is suffering from diarrhœa acts as a specific in arresting the complaint. Some wash their hands, others their faces, in the blessed stream, and now-a-days not much mischief is done. Not so in former times. It was aforetime the custom to subject infants to a third baptism; fire and water were not sufficient; they must undergo the baptism of ice. If they survived this, they could have had no original sin in them. The poor little things, protected by a warm sheep-skin from external cold, were taken from their mother's bosom, and exposed naked at this inclement season. As soon as they felt the piercing cold they began to scream and roll their little bodies into a ball. The priest laid hold of it, and dipped it in the stream. This unrolled it, and it came out again stiff, mute, and straight like a frozen sucking pig. So fatal was this procedure to the increase of population, that Government finally put a stop to it.

Many even now fall a sacrifice to the exposure which they must necessarily undergo in attendance upon this ceremony, particularly the old and infirm; for it is a religious rite, and the minds of the natives are impressed with the belief that no harm can happen to them when they are employed in God's service; so that they brave any degree of cold for the time being. Enthusiasm generates a certain quantity of caloric which may resist cold for a time; but this supply is soon exhausted, and when the passion sub-

sides the reaction follows. "He died from a cold caught from attending the blessing of the waters," is often heard in Petersburg some days after the celebration of this fête. Peter the Great received his *coup de grace* upon this very occasion. He had recovered from his attack of ischuria, but remaining long exposed to the cold he was seized with rigor: the disease returned upon him and he died.

The following anecdote will afford a good idea of the persevering obstinacy of the Russians in what they consider to be a righteous cause: — The Bishop of Nicolaieff had once been a Jew: he was now a zealous Christian. It was at the epoch of performing this ceremony that the thermometer marked thirty degrees of cold, and a cutting wind swept over the plains which extend to the east of Nicolaieff. Not a soul was to be seen in the streets. The crows fell down dead with cold: it was the desolating cold blast of the desert — the bleak wind which froze the French legions; nothing animate could resist it long.

The Boog, whose waters were to be blessed, runs at a distance of a mile from the centre of the town. Now it was probable under such circumstances, that if the ceremony were allowed to proceed as on ordinary occasions, one half of the attendants would perish. The governor consequently prevented the procedure in the ordinary way, but ordered a bucket full of water to be brought from the river to the church, there blessed and consecrated, and then restored to the parent stream. This was good homœopathic prac-

tice, and much suffering and mischief were thus avoided. But no persuasion, no arguments, would prevail upon the converted Jew to desist from the usual performance of the rites. He would and did sit down by the waters of Babel. He could not weep, but globules of ice represented his tears. He was brought home in a state of exhaustion, and died raving mad a few days afterwards.

The festivities draw to a close; the time of fasting approaches—the Carnival, a long adieu to flesh. The gaieties of the Carnival are here comprised in the seven days previous to Lent. It is styled by the natives the butter week, because it is not permitted to eat this animal substance after this period till the time of Easter. The Russian Lent commences on the Monday morning as soon as the midnight hour has sounded. There is a "Stir up" Sunday, but no Shrove Tuesday. Ash Wednesday is preceded by two days of fasting. Previous to this long, dull, and cruel privation it is thought fit to amuse the people. The scene of their pastimes is the wide space before the Admiralty, known by the name of Isaac's Plain, and there is room enough and to spare.

By the catchels or barracks erected in this space must be understood the stalls and booths of a Bartholomew fair. The only essential difference between the two consists in the circumstance, that in one instance a piece of canvas is stretched over poles, and incloses the space necessary for the mountebank's exhibition; in the other, that three weeks are employed in constructing solid timber buildings for the

same purposes. The description of the building of Santa Fé in Irving's "Memoirs of the Conquest of Granada" will not furnish a bad idea of the activity which prevails on this spot during the time devoted to the erection of the Carnival town.

One class of workmen suffice for this undertaking, viz. plotniks, or men who work with an axe, which serves them for plane, saw, axe, and chisel. It is astonishing to see with what niceness and accuracy they use this weapon,—how in the space of a short time, a building impenetrable to wind and rain raises its head, and laughs to scorn the slow labours of masonic tools. Balks of wood laid at right angles, dovetailed at the corners, the interstices between each pair of balks filled up with moss, a roof of planks, and here is your house and home accomplished before the mason has dug his foundations. So in the space of three weeks does a little town rise up upon this waste of ground, which is situated in the heart of the city, and is dedicated to the service of military parades and carnival amusements. Merriments and rejoicing have a relative signification; they do not imply the same thing in all countries. The Russians are merry by rule and line, and it is prescribed to them by the police, in what way they are to rejoice. My old cynic in Odessa had informed me that I should never hear whistling in the streets of St. Petersburg; that this was not considered to be consistent with order. Whistling, shouting, and hallooing are not permitted to the populace; the soldiers alone enjoy the privilege of shouting "huzza"

when the Emperor passes by the picquets. It is this stillness and solemnity, here styled titles of order and decorum, which render Petersburg so dull a city.

There is no life, no animation—the people observe a dead silence; they seem rather to march than to walk in the streets; and, paradoxically speaking, it is only in the silence of the night that any noise is heard. Then the outpourings of the gin shops occasionally break through the stillness, and the peculiar song of the boor informs the inhabitants that the watchmen are asleep. In the day time there is no such thing as a row or a riot, no kick-up, no fight, no fun, not even a ballad-singer to draw together a few individuals in a corner. The musical sound of a tin kettle, as it bumps along the pavement, announcing the arrival of a dog, trying to shake off an incumbrance, never greets the ear. No Mrs. Malaprop. Such things do not become an imperial city. Still one exception—still one sound is heard—one small shrill voice breaks this silence of the tomb—one whom no laws have ever yet subdued, one for whom the most eloquent of statesmen introduced a special clause of exception, in the most arbitrary of constitutional enactments—one who has defied from time immemorial the edicts thundered against him,—all-powerful Punch is tolerated in this decorous society.

It is questionable whether the language of Punch was not that of our First Parents. It is certainly a universal tongue; for it is equally comprehensible to all people. As soon as his voice is heard, children

of all nations flock around him; if they do not understand each other's language, they understand his.

The time of fast approaches. Seven weeks of gloomy penance and sorrowing for those whose station in life could never have allowed them to be gay. A week's merriment and feasting prepare the way for this. These annual preparations remind the reflecting man of the shortness of life; and nothing so well marks the progress of time in Petersburg as the erection of these booths.

It is something new — it attracts the attention, rouses the dormant faculties of the philosopher and of the clown, and serves to remind us of the departure of the old, and of the renewal of the new year. It serves instead of that sweet change of seasons by which others date time by its loss: here, on the contrary, it is so much gained upon the enemy. He who seldom sees the sun for weeks together, and if he do, cannot conscientiously say whether it be the sun or the moon; he who enjoys the light only from the reflection of the snow beneath his feet and from the house-top above, whose head is seldom warmed by the inspiring rays of a vernal sun — who neither sees the snow-drop droop its head, nor the crocus bloom by the side of the garden wall — who sees not the gooseberry bush put forth its buds, nor smells the effluvia of the fresh-turned earth in those months, which in other countries belong to the spring season — who hears no songster in the trees, nor sparrow under his house-top — such a man, I repeat, would have no idea of a rolling year, but

for the happy institution of these temporary edifices, which rise up annually about the same period of time, to convince him that the globe does not stand still, and that Petersburg doth insensibly move with it.

It is a pleasing task to watch the daily progress of spring, by the gradual and almost imperceptible degrees by which these constructions mark its advancement, rising out of the bed of snow in which their foundations are laid; for though they are completed much sooner than tenements of brick could be, still it is an operation of three weeks' duration.

The buildings, when complete, are of ample dimensions. The great booths are 250 feet in length, and 140 in breadth, and are fitted up internally as handsome amphitheatres, capable of containing on their benches 1500 spectators. Pantomime and horsemanship are the feats performed within; and it is the fashion for all classes of persons to attend the representations. The theatres are divided into different compartments, to accommodate the purses of all classes.

There are booths of minor importance, where conjurors, dancing dogs, wax work, wild beasts, and automatons are to be seen for a modicum, as at Bartholomew fair. The national amusement of ice hills makes a decided difference in the *coup-d'œil* of these representations. Here the Russian is at home, — here he enjoys himself: the whirligig is common to all countries. The ice hills, — "*nostra sunt*," says the boor. The solid edifices are all built in line, and

immediately before them, but allowing of a promenade between, are gingerbread stalls, &c. &c.

Venders of kvass, cranberry juice and water, mead, hot tea, and punch, fill up the interstices between the booths. The boor may purchase an ice for two pence, served up in a glass, with a bone spoon; but his favourite beverage on a cold day is tea punch. In one hand he holds a glass of hot tea, to which a glass of brandy and a slice of lemon have been added, in the other a lump of white sugar. The contents of each hand are presented to the mouth alternately — a nip of sugar, then a gulp of tea punch to wash it down. This is quite national; which, together with the ice hills, characterise the Russian Carnival in a special manner. The amusements last the whole week through: they commence on one Sunday and terminate the following one: no time is lost. The performances last from noon till dusk, or till the usual hour of the theatres, for they are not allowed to trespass upon these.

The three last days of the Carnival offer an animating scene: drums and fifes beating, flags flying, Punch screaming, wild beasts roaring, merry-andrews capering, trumpets sounding, strings of fashionable equipages moving round and round, crowds of people parading about — all seems for a time to have forgotten itself. The gens d'armes, stationed at every hundred yards, detract a little from the idea of free pleasure; still, when the day happens to be fine, the sky bright and cloudless, the snow reflecting its spangles from the covered roofs, together with a cer-

tain noise and din from the assembled multitude; this, I repeat, may be considered as affording the best specimen of public gaiety in the city of St. Petersburg. As soon as harlequin has performed his last feat on the Sunday evening, the Russian Carnival is at an end. Strangers, or such as are not of the Greek church, are allowed two more days of rejoicing. They enjoy the Monday and Tuesday in their own way, but on Ash Wednesday the fast is universal.

Adieu to all public gaieties for seven long weeks. The places of public amusement are all closed; no scenic representations are permitted, or such only as have something *grave* in their character, as sacred music and concerts *usque ad nauseam, horsemanship, conjuring, Punch, and similar recreations.*

People may dance in private; but bands of music are not permitted to play to them, except by sanction of the police, which, if well feed, will sanction any thing.

Many of the customs of all countries are in some measure similar, at all events the customs of many countries, how remote soever, have the same origin. The English pancake devoured on the Shrove Tuesday, is a spurious imitation of the real Russian *blennee*, which is a buck-wheat crumpet. It is eaten in the same way as English crumpets, buttered on both sides, all hot; and is the chief object of consumption by the natives during the whole of the last week of the Carnival.

This is the time to go to the English club and see the poet —— in all his glory. There he sits, eating,

with his eyes closed, for he composes at the same time, and no one makes verses with his eyes open. There he is, bolt upright. He rejects all such barbarian inventions as knives and forks, but doubles up the crumpet with his fingers and crams it into his mouth. An occasional explosion sometimes announces the warfare between the carnal and spiritual man: the spirit conquers and rises upwards, the *blennees* remain below, till, the ditch filling up by degrees, the spirit is fairly driven out, and the former rises to the very outlet. Then the system seeks repose: the body remains in the same position. It is of that shape and size that, place it as you please, it will always remain at rest: horizontally, laterally, perpendicularly, the form is alike convenient. There it remains till some one arrives to push it from its stool. Like the boa, which eats but once a year, but digests its food by degrees, so the *blennees*, which are consumed by the poet upon this occasion, furnish matter of poetry for the remainder of Lent.

The club is well attended on the last day of the Carnival. The supper table is crowded, and as much provision is stored in as the victualling-office will hold. The steak is served, grace is said, the plate signed with the cross, and the eye instinctively turns itself to the clock, to see if there be time enough to consume the food before the midnight hour; all is right, the hand of the clock points to eleven.

The morning city cries are *grebbee, karosh grebbee* (mushrooms, good mushrooms), and the man of dried

funguses unstrings his beads to every smiling cook-maid. The *pot au feu*, resigning its beef, is placed upon the shelf; water gruel, flavoured with dried mushrooms, forms the soup of the lord and his serf.

Nothing animal is consumed by the strictly religious during this long period. Tea is drunk without cream, coffee without milk, save what is manufactured from almond paste, not a bad substitute, particularly at sea. Lump sugar is rejected; for although it is not animal matter, it has been refined with bullock's blood. Tea is sweetened with preserves, which have been prepared with raw sugar. It was formerly forbidden sick people to take any medicine derived from the animal kingdom, as musk, castor, hartshorn, &c.

A fast dinner consists of mushroom soup, and patties containing the same within, the crust made with olive oil; fish tortured in all ways; vegetables dressed with oil, and sweets in profusion. The deficiency in solids is compensated for in the abundance of spirituous comfort, in spite of the assertion that wine is a mocker and strong drinks are raging. They are allowed to furnish proofs of it.

A certain degree of gaiety does prevail among the lower classes during the last week of the carnival; still there is not in their manners or deportment that appearance of fun and merriment attendant on an English fair. There is something too military in the *tout ensemble;* no scuffle, no fight, no bustle, no uproarious laughter, no jolly tar with his lass and bludgeon. And what is fun when deprived of these

attributes? It is, as Falstaff would say, to be merry on compulsion.

A horrible catastrophe remains to be related, which was attendant upon this fête some years ago, and of which I was partly an eye-witness.

On arriving from the country at the barrier upon the first day of the carnival, and before the booths were completed, I observed an immense cloud of smoke suddenly ascend from the centre of the town; which was soon dissipated by a blaze of light; and as I proceeded farther into the town, I was aware that one of the principal booths had caught fire and was burning to the ground. It was already unroofed, and from a distance it resembled a fairy temple illuminated by rows of lamps. There was no burst of flame, but each plank was on fire, which ran along its edge as if rows of lamps had been placed there purposely. As it was the first day of the carnival, and the buildings hardly completed, I imagined the booth had probably taken fire during a rehearsal, and that no lives could have been compromised.

Alas! delusion soon vanished, and the sight of mangled bodies, being transported into adjoining houses, made me shudder with horror.

The theatre was full of spectators, and the doors closed and fastened, as usual upon the commencement of the pantomime.

The great doors of egress, which, when the performance is finished, allow of a large sortie, had been locked on the inside, and opened inwards. The doors

of ingress allowed but of one person to pass at a time; hence there was no retreat on either side.

The performance had just commenced: the rope dancer was upon the cord. It was the master of the company—the clown of the pantomime. He quitted his rope with a sudden spring, and vanished behind the stage curtain: he re-appeared immediately, and cried out in bad Russ—Fire! fire! The mob took it for a Merry Andrew joke, and clapped their hands. He again left the stage in hopes of being able to quench the fire, which had broken out behind the scenes. It was too late; the roof was on fire. Still the spectators did not quit their seats till the curtain was raised, when they saw that the stage was enveloped in smoke. The roof, covered with tarpaulin, was soon one mass of flame, and the burning planks and melted pitch poured down upon the heads of the audience, who, panic-struck, and scorched by radiating heat, were huddled together as in a penfold which had no egress. All rushed towards the door, which, fastened from within, yielded to no pressure. No soul could find an exit; and when the fire was discovered from without, few believed that there was an audience within.

In a few seconds from the first spark, as from a sheet of lightning, all was in a flame, for the materials were of the most combustible kind.

"Then rose from earth to heaven the wild farewell,"

and but one shriek was heard; for the voice was paralyzed by the inhalation of clouds of suffocating

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smoke, from the combustion of brimstone and other inflammable materials used in different scenes of the pantomime.

Two bodies tumbling from the top of the burning rafters, and falling upon the ground on the outside of the booth, explained the real state of the case. Some score of carpenters, who were working with their axes upon an adjoining building, came to the rescue, and might, by a few strokes of their hatchets, have liberated most of the unhappy sufferers; but immediately the *gens d'armes* stepped forward and opposed their interference, making use of that most significant of Russian phrases — *Nee precoshet* (it is not ordered). In cases of fire, the engines are not allowed to play upon a burning building, until the police master arrives to give the order. The same law was acted upon in this instance. The police master was not there, and *it was not ordered;* and a few men, furnished with sabres, put to nought the active impulse of humanity.

In what other country would a few policemen have been able to prevent the multitude from rushing to the succour of their brethren under such awful circumstances? In what other country would such passive obedience to the letter of the law have prevailed? What sentinel on duty would not elsewhere have laid down his musket and helped to tear away a plank to save a fellow citizen? Here were hundreds of sufferers liable to be sacrificed to the absurdity of indiscriminate and absolute law.

In the midst of the consternation the sovereign himself arrives. He had seen the flames from his

palace window, and the humane monarch, wringing his hands in despair, rushed himself to the succour, and encouraged those around him. Some planks were soon torn away from beneath, and a number crawled out from the opening; and when the side of the building was laid bare, where the doors of exit were placed, heaps of victims were found lying pellmell upon each other, for the mass had rushed towards this spot. The Emperor with his own hands drew two bodies from beneath, and many were thus saved from destruction; for the greater part of those near this spot were mostly in a state of asphyxia.

Some escaped unhurt, by forcing open the doors of entrance on the opposite side of the building; some, who had their senses more at command, rushed upon the stage, and, passing almost through the flames, made their exit from the doors behind the scenes. Those who were removed the farthest from the stage remained upon their benches, and, tearing up the planks under their feet, dropped from above upon the ground, and were protected by a canopy of planks which had so lately formed their footstool: all these were saved. Many of the mutilated who escaped with life could give no account of the manner in which they had been delivered from the flames. A young female told me, that she was not aware of any danger till she found her bonnet on fire, which had been set in a flame by radiating caloric: she then remembered being picked up from the snow, but knew nothing of what had transpired from the time she found her head on fire till her subsequent extrica-

tion. Her shoulder and neck were seriously burnt. As regards those whose mangled bodies testified to their previous sufferings, it is hardly possible to describe the different states in which they were found. I counted one hundred and twenty-five mangled corpses in one large hall, extended there for recognition by their friends: but how was the greater number to be recognised? Every degree of mutilation presented itself, from the almost uninjured body to a mass of mangled flesh, without head or limb, or even integument to cover the protruding viscera. In many the face and hairy scalp were burnt up, leaving the head a black charred ball fixed to an entire body; some trunks were headless, some without limbs; some of the corpses stiffened by death in various positions; arms stretched out, legs doubled up; some entire corpses exhibiting in their bloated faces the last struggles of asphyxia. To this appalling sight add the cries of women seeking for their husbands, and of parents weeping over the mutilated remains of their children, and then the ever-intruding thought that they might have been saved.

The remains of the burnt building were removed during the night, and the space which it had occupied was covered with snow, batted down to hide the blood which had been spilt. What a day for the Emperor! what a sight for a monarch! what harrowing up of his soul when contemplating his prostrate subjects begging him to restore them their lost children, for he was believed almighty! Did he ever feel himself less so? The tears rolled down his manly

cheeks, and the man exclaimed in the anguish of his soul, "I am not the giver of life!"

Servants, who had escorted children to the booths, and had escaped with their own lives, ran about distracted, not daring to return home without their charge. It would swell the history too much were I to detail particular cases of individual despair, of mad actions committed during temporary loss of sense, or to relate the providential escapes, or seeming operations of chance, in preventing the exposure of many to the accident.

I never recollect to have seen more people at the Catchellis than on the following Sunday, which was the last of the carnival.

CHAP. VIII.

MODE OF CUTTING ICE IN RIVER. ERECT BLOCKS RESEMBLING STONEHENGE. ICE CELLARS. TRADE IN ICE. ITS GREAT CONSUMPTION. OBSERVANCE OF FAST BY DIFFERENT CLASSES. A ZAPPOI. PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS DURING LENT. CONCERTS. COURT SINGERS. BATHS. COLD AFFUSION. PRECAUTIONS AGAINST EVIL CONSEQUENCES.

As soon as a fall of snow announces the commencement of winter in London, and as soon as the horse and duck ponds in the environs are covered with a pellicle of ice, so soon do the provident fruiterers, confectioners, and fishmongers sally forth in order to collect wherewith to fill their cellars. Who knows if another opportunity may occur? *carpe diem*, i. e. collect the ice.

Not so the conditor of Petersburg; he has no such fears; and the same operations which announce in southern climates the approach of winter are with us the harbingers of spring.

It is our snow-drop which now lifts its head above the surface in form of a pillar of ice. It is in fact during Lent, which has now commenced, for the catchellis are already removed, and the Isaac's Plain is again swept clean, that the peasants commence their operations on the river. Towards the end of January the ice has attained its maximum of thickness: I hardly know the average, but in 1838 a block

of ice which I measured was forty-four inches English in solidity.

Symptoms of cutting for ice are first observable by the inclosures of large surfaces of the river within slight railings. These inclosures are intended to prevent drunkards from falling into the ice-holes when they may be reeling across the river at night; and notwithstanding this precaution the accident does sometimes occur.

As soon as a square space is thus marked out the operation commences by excavating a ditch on all sides, and thus insulating the square mass of ice. This ditch is formed by repeated strokes of a pointed crowbar, which shelves off large brittle masses at each stroke, and as the depth increases these are shovelled out.

As soon as the ditch is pierced to the surface of the water, the latter rises up, and the inclosed mass is now floating loose upon the water. It is as yet a single solid square of ice, which is divided into equal portions by rule and line; and a few strokes of the crowbar are sufficient to split the pieces asunder. The most laborious part of the operation consists in extricating the solid masses from the water on which they float.

A small wooden machine, much resembling the dray upon which beer-barrels are drawn along the pavement in London, is employed for this purpose. It is introduced under the floating masses, which, by means of poles and hooks, are placed singly upon it; a curved rising extremity prevents the mass from

slipping off when lodged upon its bars, and by means of ropes attached to the other extremity of the dray it is hauled out by main force. The greatest difficulty occurs in the extrication of the first block of ice, from want of room: when one is hauled out the difficulty of removing the remainder is much diminished. When they are all safely landed upon the shore of snow, and set up perpendicularly, they resemble from a distance the stones upon Salisbury Plain, which go by the name of Stonehenge.

If neither sand nor extraneous matter has been introduced into the block whilst freezing, it is beautifully transparent, like a mass of pure glass. The least particle of matter which may have insinuated itself in the act of congelation renders the whole mass of a dirty muddy appearance. The under surface is always smooth like a pane of glass; the upper, rough from the indentations made into the frozen snow which covers it. Here it is set on end and exposed to sale, like stones out of a quarry, and may be purchased wholesale or retail. As it is generally destined for the ice-cellar, it is usual to contract for the supply of this during the entire year. As many blocks as are necessary to fill the cellar are conveyed by drays to its mouth; here they are broken up into small fragments, and shovelled in like coals down the areas in London.

The consumption of ice is great in the hot weather. It is a *sine quâ non* in housekeeping; all meat is preserved by being laid upon it, and all fermented liquors must be cooled in the same way. The great Russian

brewers consume 2000 tons annually, to prevent the beer becoming sour in hot weather. The butchers consume enormous quantities, and every housekeeper, nay, almost every peasant, boasts of his ice-cellar. As much as a guinea's worth is consumed by a moderate establishment yearly. It is collected during a period of about two months; but the earlier in the season that the cellars are supplied the better. If the blocks of ice be long exposed to the rays of the sun after they have been extricated from the river, disintegration commences, the mass becomes porous, falls easily to pieces, and, when stowed into the cellar, dissolves too rapidly.

Ice is retailed in the shops at about a farthing per pound all the year through. If the summer have been long and hot, the price of course varies with the supply on hand. It is plentifully served up on the tables in fragments, which are put into tumblers of French wines for common drink. Champagne is never served up but in a bed of ice.

As drinkables are permitted during Lent, ice must be furnished to refrigerate them. The fasts of the Greek church are more severe and of longer duratino than those of the Romish, which permits the use of eggs and milk.

There are three modes of observing the fasts by the Russians—most rigidly, more loosely, and not at all. The higher classes in general pay but little attention to these observances, as far as abstaining from animal food is concerned. They do pretend, however, at their own tables, for example's sake, to

dine without meat during the first and last weeks of Lent. This they remedy by supping at clubs or taverns. There are many, however, even among the educated Russians, of an ascetic turn of mind, who deprive themselves of all kinds of enjoyment for a long space of time. They deny themselves the pleasures of speech; they abstain from snuff, from perfumes; they sleep on hard mattresses, man and wife separate, or, like Goldsmith's fiddler and his wife, who quarrelled, put a fiddle-case down the bed for a partition. Of fast food mention has been already made. Corporeal punishments, flagellations, pinching, thumping the head upon the floor, eternal genuflections, such as Colman's knight and his lady could never have supported, — all for the pardon of past trespasses.

"*Soyez meilleure, ma tante, et mangez gras,*" said the young count to his old aunt, whose life was anything but exemplary. No; all may be cancelled by seven weeks' mortification: clean washed, and ready to commence a fresh score.

The mercantile classes observe these fasts very rigidly, and the peasants look upon their strict observance of them as a *sine quâ non* of salvation. It is singular that the fathers of the church should not have prohibited the consumption of ardent spirits at this season also.

There is no law which enforces an abstinence of this kind, if we may judge from the frequent occurrence of drunkenness at this period of mortification. A zappoi in Lent is quite *à-la-mode:* this may be

styled a drunken bout of ten, fifteen, or twenty days' duration, occurring at irregular intervals during life; and, as it is in a great measure influenced by malaria, it may come under the class of Dr. M'Culloch's anonymous intermittents. That it should occur at this period is very explicable. The system is exhausted by fasting; the stomach is filled with ingesta from which little nourishment can be extracted, and, its own secretions being weakened, it cannot digest the food offered to it. Some extraneous stimulus is indicated. Spirits are at hand, and the sense of craving is lulled by taking a dram. This frequently repeated soon verges towards intoxication, and the patient (for he merits this name) awakes in the morning with shame and confusion at the idea of having added intoxication to his catalogue of crimes. Still the stomach rejects the idea of solid food, and the stimulus is again exhibited; the third day finds things worse, and a small quantity of spirit is now sufficient to keep up the irritation of this fever, which is sustained during a period of two or three weeks by the same course of excitement. A crisis both physical and moral takes place. Oaths are taken, vows are made, prayers are said, images worshipped, confessors feed, and the individual abstains for months, nay, perhaps for years, from the taste of spirits. Some circumstance may again renew the temptation, and the debauch is again its consequence. This, in the technical language of the country, is called a *zappoi.*

It is not confined to any class of society, nor to any period of the year; but, from the above specified

causes, it is not uncommon in Lent, when the system, enfeebled by fasting, is more susceptible of the effects of spirits than at other periods.

A rich merchant advertises a feast to solemnise some occasion, and the man who contents himself with black bread and cabbage soup four-fifths of the year occasionally launches out into unheard-of epicurean extravagances. His board is furnished with all that is costly and rare; champagne flows as from a fountain. The guests mostly finish by being *hors de combat*, for that day at least, and the host himself suffers for weeks afterwards. His system has been shaken, his stomach deranged, his morning prayer is for champagne, an irritable tremor ensues, and solid food is rejected; wine loses its power; stronger stimulus is demanded, and libations of blue ruin convert it into a zappoi.

The crisis past, there are tears, lamentations, vows and donations, abstinence for a time, and good resolutions for the future; but the malaria is scotched, not killed, and the intermittent returns at some future period.

The higher classes of society are not included in this category. Young noblemen may commit excesses, but the better class of Russians are moderate in all which concerns the table. They generally drink French wine mixed with water. Some exceptions do occur. I met with a celebrated botanist at an English table, who had arrived from the borders of Tartary, and seeing him refuse all the lighter wines, and ply himself freely with port, I asked him where

he had acquired this truly English style. He smiled, and told me that he had fallen in with some English missionaries who had imported some cases of port wine into Oranburg for their special drinking, and he found that it agreed so well with him that he never passed the bottle, when he was lucky enough to meet with it on table. It is not much drunk by the Russians, who prefer Madeira. Champagne is indispensable at all aristocratic tables.

As public amusements are for the most part interdicted during Lent, the people resort to sacred music as a chief resource, and concerts and oratorios abound. The musical critics of Petersburg are reputed to be very severe and very hard to please; hence few strangers meet with success here as musical performers. They are more tolerant towards the Germans than towards any other people, but then the criticising audience is itself two-thirds German. The Italian Opera failed after a short time: it was too expensive, and the performers maintained that they lost two notes from the effects of cold. Some violin players, as the two Eichorns and Ole Bull, have met with great success. The Countess ——, who still sings for charitable purposes, is the idol of the musical world here as elsewhere.

Cowper's complaint against Nature is as applicable to myself as to him —

> "Ears though she gave me two, gave me no ear."

Yet, in spite of this truism, I think it may be maintained that it is not necessary to understand music in

order to be fond of it. There is no nation less musical than the English, and there is none more fond of it.

To the real amateurs of this science, Petersburg offers a grand and unique pleasure of its kind in the rehearsal of the court singers. This ceremony is performed every Saturday, when the music is rehearsed which the choristers are to sing the following day in the cathedral.

For this purpose, a room constructed upon the most approved acoustic principles has been contrived. It is necessary to obtain tickets of admission to these rehearsals, and it is not always easy to do so, for the room is not very large, and the audience is never small. The singers stand upon a platform, raised about three feet above the level of the floor; there is a place appropriated to the Capel-meister in the centre of the row of choristers, and his office upon this occasion is merely to strike the note on the chord of a violin. The greater part of the choristers are children, who certainly sing like cherubim: at this time, however (1829), they have a guardsman, who was transferred hither from the circumstance of his possessing a splendid bass voice. The performance lasts for about two hours, during which time some four or five anthems are executed. The boys are dressed in uniforms *à la militaire.* They are only allowed to sing in churches. They are harshly disciplined, and look lank and lean.

The Russians maintain that people cannot be cleanly in their persons who do not make use of

general ablutions in the shape of warm baths. There is some truth in this; and it is singular that a people so cleanly in their habits as the British should so long have neglected this comfortable and easy mode of corporal ablution. In reply to this, the British assert that the Russians only wash themselves at particular times, once a week, or less frequently, and then do on a wholesale scale what they do themselves in detail every morning. The English will not allow that the face can be cleansed by rubbing it with a dry towel, which can at best but polish the mahogany; nor is this to be placed upon the same footing of cleanliness as sousing head and neck in a basin of cold water before breakfast. A sallow, yellow, shining Russian dowager will tell a blooming English girl that she will spoil her complexion if she allow cold water to approach her face; heedless of which, she persists in doing the one and retaining the other. "Mon mari s'est allé au bain pour se décrotter," said a lady to me. "Enfin il était temps d'ôter cette crasse."

Those even who are more cleanly in their habits, nevertheless do not appreciate the advantages of scrubbing and sousing, which are so well understood in England. When the nobleman has shaved himself his servant offers him a towel, the end of which has been dipped into a jug of warm water, and then his valet pours a little out of the same jug over his hands, and this part of the toilette is finished.

As regards the peasantry the baths are absolutely necessary: they employ no other means of ablution;

and but for this the olfactory nerves could not stand the smell which emanates from their bodies, and particularly in the fast time, when impregnated with train oil, cabbage, turnips, mushrooms, &c. Towards Saturday night he is insupportable. On Sunday he is fresh from the bath; on Monday the effluvia is faint; on Tuesday, rancid; on Wednesday, sour; and the following days, fit only for the pen of Swift to describe.

The bath is a blessing therefore, wisely ordained to prevent infection under such circumstances; and of baths there is no lack either in town or country. The baths in the city are on a large scale, and are generally profitable speculations. The town, intersected as it is by canals, offers great facilities for their establishment. They are not what they have been generally represented — neither so good nor so bad: but this advantage the resident enjoys over the traveller, he sees things in their every-day dress, and novelty leads him into no extremes. They are not so bad, inasmuch as men, women, and children do not bathe promiscuously in the same room; they do not, on the other hand, realise the poetic ideas formed of the ancient thermæ. The process is a simple washing with warm water; the means of execution are equally simple, as it is performed in the common establishments. A square room of different dimensions, heated by a stove of earthenware, which is placed in one corner and reaches from the floor to the ceiling, furnished with benches, rising near to the roof, as in a common amphitheatre; upon

the floor the common cave or bath as used everywhere, some pails of cold water, a large brush to which a long handle is attached: — this is the whole economy of a Russian sudatorium. The body feels an agreeable glow immediately upon entering the room; and if a higher temperature is required, it is only necessary to mount the benches, which, as caloric ascends, are hottest near the ceiling. Spread yourself then at full length upon the topmost bench, or sit up, as you please; if perspiration burst not from all the pores, there are means of making it do so. Call the bath man; he takes a pail half full of water, and dashes it upon the hot stove: converted into vapour it rises, and, impinging upon the cooler body, instantly becomes condensed again into a fluid form: the pores become relaxed by such means; or if not, the same man will flagellate you with bunches of brushwood with the dried leaves on, till you become as red as a lobster; then a whisp of thick shavings dipped in soap suds serves to scrub you down. When the body has thus been cleansed, descend from on high to the middle of the ground floor; let the man pour a bucket of warm water over your head — how grateful is the sensation! — then a second bucket less warm, and a third quite cold, then towel it well, and the business is over. The common people assemble by scores, and assist each other in these operations.

The bath is generally employed towards evening, and, if possible, a few hours' repose should be indulged in afterwards: the effects are both exciting

and enervating, and a gentle slumber generally follows its employment. The octogenarian and the waddling child alike indulge in it; and as care is taken to protect the surface from cold upon leaving the sudatorium, few bad effects result from it. The transition from heat to cold has nothing formidable in its effects, because the excitement of the former is too great to allow of any depressing influence from the latter. The celebrated Dr. Currie has sufficiently explained this in his essays on *cold affusion*, which practice was, at one period much in vogue in the treatment of fevers. It was during the hot paroxysm that cold water was dashed from a height all over the body, or the patient plunged into a cold bath; and the immediate reaction was so powerful that the skin became relaxed, and that perspiration was produced which is so grateful to the patient under these circumstances.

In many instances it has been found sufficient to cut short an attack of fever, when employed at the commencement of the hot stage.

Hence a necessary caution to bathers — not to wait till the body becomes cool before they plunge into the water. It is in this stage that there may be danger; for excitement has already passed away, and the body cannot resist the depressing influence of cold. If the surface be dry, and the heat above the natural standard, little is to be feared from immersion into a lower temperature. If the body be cooled down, and the surface be covered with moisture, such experiments should not be hazarded.

The baths in Petersburg are upon a large scale. Private rooms are supplied for families; and all kinds of baths may be procured at any hour of the day or night. The physical convenience is great, the moral problematical: they are bagnios in its equivocal sense.

Foreigners do not much indulge in them; and there are hitherto no *bains à domicile.* Lord Carlisle, when ambassador at the court of Moscow, describes the use of the Russian bath with that degree of enthusiasm which travellers express upon seeing any thing new.

"It is not uncommon for the natives to leave the bath and roll themselves in the snow. Two-year-old children are seen to do this with impunity." But

"Nil tam mirabile quidquam
Quod non minuant mirarier omnes paulatim."

CHAP. IX.

SEVERITY OF COLD IN FEBRUARY. WASHERWOMEN ON NEVA. SBETIN. ICE SOLD IN STREETS. HAWKER OF EATABLES. END OF LENT. PREPARATIONS FOR EASTER. EGGS EXCHANGED AS EASTER GIFTS. FEASTS OF THE MERCHANTS. FIRING OF CANNON. RINGING OF BELLS. LEVEE AT PALACE. EASTER WEEK. BREAKING UP OF FROST. STATE OF STREETS. APPEARANCE OF ICE IN THE RIVER. DEPARTURE OF ICE. SPLENDID VIEW UPON OPENING OF THE WATER. ARRIVAL OF VESSELS IN CRONSTADT.

WE were now in the month of February, and the cold was very severe. It is in general during this month that the greatest cold prevails. From the commencement of the winter up to the present date no thaw had taken place, which, as we were told, was a remarkable circumstance; for about Christmas the weather *generally gives.* This again was a remarkable season: the old story in all climates for new settlers. The thermometer marked as low as — 29° of Réaumur. Incrustations an inch thick covered the inside of the windows. The severity of the cold was manifest on many of the drivers' faces: large ulcers disfigured their cheeks. The little postilions dropped from their horses benumbed and apparently lifeless. Many sentinels were frozen in their boxes; and although these and similar misfortunes occur occasionally, they were more frequent than usual.

It was a *remarkably severe season,* and the assertion

was perfectly true, for; during a subsequent residence of thirteen years, I have never known the same degree of cold as indicated by the thermometer. It is only surprising that people can resist the cold as they do; for it is usual to see the porters, who live in a little lodge by the gate-side, present themselves without shoes or stockings, the head bare, and perhaps in their shirts, and this in the middle of the night, and in the most piercing cold. Such exposure would apparently threaten immediate congelation, and so it would under other circumstances; but though they expose themselves in this way, it is only for a few seconds, and then they are much in the situation of men in the warm bath, when the cold water is poured over them. Four or five men, *Dvornicks,* whose business it is to sweep the streets, to brush away the snow from before the doors, and to keep the yards clean, dwell all together in a small room just large enough to hold them. Here they lie covered by a sheepskin fast asleep. The room is heated by a stove, and the animal heat is of itself sufficient to warm them. The heat of this room, the izbar, is equal to that of the sudatorium; and they emerge from this, expose themselves to the severest cold for a few seconds, and then return to it again; the caloric which they carried out with them having been sufficient to protect them against the influence of the external atmosphere. Those who are exposed to it for any considerable period, and particularly coachmen and postilions, suffer most cruelly from exposure, perhaps from seven in the evening till two the next morning, awaiting the great

man's pleasure, who is engaged at cards during that period. Then it is that the poor little lads fall benumbed off their horses, and it is necessary to roll them in the snow to bring them to life again. The servants who wait in cold corridors and upon staircases, where draughts always prevail, do not admire the fêtes which abound in the hard season.

It is nevertheless surprising that more illness is not generated by exposure to the intense cold which often prevails. I should say that for the most part the illnesses of the people are brought on by their own imprudence in this respect. It is not from necessity, so much as from wilful exposure, that these misfortunes arise; but they are careless of life, for few can find it a blessing. The houses of the peasantry are particularly warm, and in towns the people huddle together in warm rooms, heated even to suffocation, and sometimes fatal to the inmates. As I am now writing, a melancholy fact of this kind has just come under my cognisance. Three men had shut themselves up in an izbar, which was heated to +30 degrees of Réaumur. In the morning two were found quite dead, and the third lying senseless at the door-sill. He was recovered. The others died of asphyxia. Some, on the contrary, perish in the streets from the effects of cold. Reeling along in a state of intoxication, they fall down into the areas, sleep and perish. The cold of this climate, however, taken in its general sense, is one of the most supportable of its evils.

The washerwomen seem as capable of resisting

cold, as salamanders fire. They are seen standing or stooping, without shoes or stockings, their arms bare, dipping the linen into holes cut in the ice upon the river on the coldest days, enveloped in frost smoke. I have heard of few accidents from such exposure.

Sbetin, sbetin; and this is the time to drink a composition of honey, mint-water, and other carminatives which are sold piping hot in the streets. The vender of sbetin, like the Marchand de Cacao in Paris, carries his shop upon his back. It is a large can, covered over with a cloth or flannel; before him he has a girdle filled with small glasses, into which he pours this warm and wholesome beverage. The half-frozen postilion thrusts his hand into his breast, and drawing out a bag of coppers, exchanges them for a glass of warm sbetin, which is with him the stepping-stone to stronger liquor. The shopkeeper, stamping with his feet, and beating his body to keep it warm (for in the great bazaar no fire is allowed), drinks his glass of sbetin, which the washerwoman also sips as she rinces her linen in the freezing stream.

Tea is sold in the streets, and is in much request during the fast. The merchant drinks it out of a tumbler with a slice of lemon, and sweetened with preserves made of moist sugar. As nothing from the animal kingdom is then permitted, bread and caviare are the only eatables vended by the itinerant in the streets. His basket, which at other times contains hard eggs, ham, cold liver and offal, tripe, sausages, &c., is now only furnished with the row of the sturgeon wherewith to supply his customers. Upon this

even the wealthy merchant often makes his repast. Standing behind his counter, he requires no spread table. The victualler enters; he takes a flat cake out of his basket, splits it open, besmears it with caviare spooned out of little tubs made of the bark of the birch-tree; and this is his dinner. Upon this may follow his glass of tea, for the urn is always smoking in his neighbourhood. With this fare is the same man contented, who, at some future period, will give a feast worthy of Epicurus.

The fast has passed its meridian, and symptoms begin to indicate the approach of Easter. This is the real fête of the people, this is the period at which they do eat, drink, and make merry; but great preparations announce its advent. The atmosphere itself manifests some tokens of its approach, the weather gets milder; but as Easter is a moveable feast, this naturally varies. This year it happened to fall late, so that all the transactions from latent to free caloric were accomplished ere its arrival.

In passing along the Isaac's Plain, I observed the same preparations making for the erection of booths as previous to the Carnival. As these had scarcely been cleared away, before preparations were making to put them up again, it appeared to me that as their solidity was quite sufficient to have withstood all the effects of climate, so it was useless to have removed them during the short space of seven weeks; and this the more so, as they are rebuilt in the same manner, and hired by the same performers. This short-sighted reasoning, however, was soon rectified.

In the first place, it would be profane to allow of such remnants of worldly-mindedness to greet the people's eyes during the fast and penitence; secondly, they occupy too much space for the convenient passage of carriages; and last, not least, it would prevent the premium afforded to the poor men of the axe, who during the hard weather can find but little occupation.

As I have always maintained the doctrine that man, *cæteris paribus*, should be able by his own labour to feed and clothe himself, I much admired this administration. The erection and demolition of these buildings employ the carpenters during six weeks of the severest weather.

I perceived then preparations for their resurrection, which, with many other things, announced the advent of this joyous festival.

The eggs dyed of various colours were displayed in the shop windows. An easter egg is to the laity what easter offerings are to the clergy, viz. peace offerings. The eggs are of very different merits and value. The common kind are dyed by wrapping worsted round them, and then boiling them, which imparts the tint to the shell. But china eggs adorned by paintings from subjects of holy writ are furnished for the wealthier part of the community. "*Christos voskrest*," says a lady who presents you with an egg on Easter day, upon which you kiss her forehead and reply, "truly he is risen."

All the small retail shops present a lively appearance previous to Easter. Ribbands, new caps, grace

the windows; and in common conversation there is continual mention of the approaching festival. It is only a few days previous that the most decided symptoms are indicated.

The poorer classes are seen returning from market with a rib of beef, or a square piece of pork, or perhaps an entire ham in their hand, swinging it along in triumph. The cook shops smell savoury, the pastry cooks' and bakers' windows display an infinite variety of cakes, all garnished with flowers. The evening previous the streets throng with people, all with something in their hands, a bottle of wine, a pie wrapped up in a napkin, a salmagundi covered over; indeed every species of comestible to fill the long-empty stomach. If you peep over the blinds into the eating rooms, you see a table covered with a white cloth, upon which cold dishes are placed. These tables admit of all degrees of display from one to forty dishes.

The hard eggs and cold fish chopped up together make a kind of salad with which the boors are well content. Sterbt from the Volga, caviare from the Caspian, melons from Astrakan, and pheasants from the Phasis adorn the merchant's table.

Awaiting the midnight hour he contemplates his feast in store, perhaps his last meal. His church calls him to her bosom; he crosses himself as he takes a temporary farewell, and hastens to his orisons. The hour draweth nigh: the churches fill to suffocation. Not all the frankincense burnt upon the altars can annihilate the smell of the fast food as it takes its

spiritual flight through the pores. Hark to the cannon's sound! a salvo from the fortress announces that Christ has risen from the tomb. This is reechoed by all the bells from a hundred belfries. All is mad with joy.

> Verkündiget ihr dumpfen Glocken schon
> Des Osterfestes erste Feierstunde?

The streets throng, and men, women, and children embrace each other, and speak the emphatic words — *Christos voskrest.*

On this evening there is a supper at the palace, and the following day a grand levee at court, where the dignitaries are received in all their paraphernalia.

The Emperor has to receive the embraces of hundreds of his subjects, who approach him with the same salutation as the boors make use of in the streets. This is the hardest field-day of the year, for, although the presentation on the new year is more numerous, he does not come into such close contact with his beloved beards as upon the present occasion.

Let us turn towards Ivan Ivavovitch, the bearded merchant, and look into his interior: there he sits at the head of his table, devouring in solemn silence the feast prepared for him. Champagne is quaffed in goblets to dilute the solid mass, and well be it for him if he resist the effects of this surfeit. *Hinc subitæ mortis,* and he may fall from his chair in a fit of apoplexy.

During the whole of the Easter week the streets are thronged with people, who kiss and embrace each other. The servants present you with eggs at every house where you call, and a *quid pro quo* is expected;

and it is a very heavy yearly tax upon your pocket. Every house that you frequent taxes you with an Easter egg, having before taxed you with a new year's gift. If you have any business transactions with the inferior classes you are sure to be reminded of it on the present occasion. In genteel society presents are often exchanged under the titles of Easter eggs; some even pay their physicians at this period: would that the custom were more general! Cards are exchanged by the corps diplomatique and by families who are in the habit of visiting. Marriages are celebrated, children are christened, and intoxication becomes a merit.

Labour stands still for a whole week, unless the labour which furnishes amusement to the public. The catchellis are crowded in the afternoon, the theatres in the evening; but the week over, things return to their ordinary state. If the weather be fine, it is a gay and happy period, and few countries celebrate it in so joyful a manner. It is the great fête of the church and of the people. Birth days, names' days, saints' days, old and new year, are all swallowed up in this crowning jubilee.

The second grand epoch by which we date time in this country had been accomplished.

The river again flowed smoothly and placidly along, rejoicing the hearts of those who had now hopes of escape from Russia. The period of embargo levied by Jack Frost upon the shipping averages about five months, occasionally six; but there is no safety for mariners between the 10th of November and the 1st of May.

The idea of confinement is insupportable to the human mind, which will allow of no voluntary restraint, and this feeling manifests itself upon all occasions. To a being like myself, destined to remain of free choice in Petersburg or its neighbourhood, what difference could it make whether the river flows freed from or covered by a layer of ice?

Still this idea of being a prisoner at large is insupportable, and I hailed the restoration of the navigation with feelings of joy and satisfaction. Many occurrences precede and prepare us for this event. The sun has already exercised some influence: the snow has melted away from the roofs of those houses which have a southern aspect. As soon as a decided thaw commences it is necessary to shovel the snow off from the roofs, for the snow-water penetrates through and damages the interior; and as it falls down from the roofs of the palaces and hotels, it is not much unlike the avalanche which I witnessed at Gavarni in the Pyrenees. This is repeated several times in the spring, when thaw and frost alternate. The streets then offer a singular appearance; on the sunny side the gutters are running, in the centre of the road the dust is flying, and on the north side the ice may be a foot thick.

It is necessary to break this up in order to uncover the drains, and allow the melted snow to run off. This is done by means of pointed iron bars, and is a laborious business; for the snow in the streets is no longer snow, except in its superficies; the great mass of it is solid ice, and a foot thick, as hard almost as the

paving stones over which it lies, and which are moulded into it. Those who have only witnessed a fall of snow in the streets of southern capitals, where it remains only a day or two, can form no idea of the breaking up of the frost and snow in this country.

At the commencement of winter there is generally a fall of snow, which remains a few days in its original form; a slight thaw by day dissolves it partially, and a sharp frost by night converts it into ice, which takes the form of the paving stones, and forms the first layer or primitive rocks of geologists. This is again partially broken up by the horses' feet, and rendered pulverulent, and being mixed with a quantity of sand swept from the flags (for every housekeeper is obliged to strew sand before his door) and horse dung, lies almost loose upon the surface; a second thaw dissolves the ice of which this loose material is composed, and subsequent frost again consolidates it: and this is several times repeated, forming as it were stratified rocks, upon whose surface there is always an alluvial formation of sand and horse dung. When it is broken up in the spring, it offers a good specimen of stratification.

It is impossible to describe the inconvenience of driving about Petersburg at this season. No vehicle is suited to the streets. A large surface thawed down to the paving stones allows no sledge to grate over it. No horse can drag it through.

The ups and downs, the holes, the ravines and the thousand irregularities of surface are fatal to all wheels. There is only one method of procedure;

lay up your own carriages, and hire hacks for the occasion.

Whilst these operations have been going on in the streets, the state of the river has undergone several changes. The skaters have disappeared; a sheet of water covers their stage; and if this freeze at night, it is dissolved by the morrow's sun, so that there is an end to their diversion.

The white sheet of snow which has covered the river for so many months begins to wear a different aspect. The roads across the river are now very traceable, from the melting of the snow, which brings to view the dirt and sand in the horse tracks. The crows and jackdaws, finding grain along the paths, flock in greater number to the river, and when the thaw commences, ill-looking dogs are attracted by the variety of offal which, long buried in the snow, and consolidated by the frost, now reappears at the surface. This is the real time for the *Podaroshnas* (snow buntings), so called in Russ from their flocking to the roads, of course to get food. They are considered a great delicacy, "*res fisci est*," cannot be had at any price, belong to the Emperor, yet may be easily purchased. They stand us in stead of the Becca Fic in Italy.

The whole surface of the snow presents a dirty and sickly appearance; and a sign of approaching dissolution is the breaking up of the coat of ice which has covered the holes from which the blocks had been extracted.

This, being of no great thickness, is soon dissolved

by the influence of the sun, and the river flows smoothly along in these open squares, and gladdens the eye.

At this season the weather is often peculiarly fine; not a cloud in the sky; the sun is reflected thousand fold from the spangling snow, and the stream is seen here and there bursting out from beneath the ice and flowing along. Symptoms of disintegration are visible in some few blocks of ice which may have remained unsold upon the spot whence they were extracted. Upon examining them closely they present a fluted texture, and when far advanced in the season fall to pieces upon being touched in long triangular spiculæ. They disintegrate like some of the efflorescent salts when exposed to the air.

It is now dangerous to venture across the river in heavy vehicles, and the roads are cut through purposely to prevent any accidents. Foot passengers pass and repass till the very last moment of dissolution, although several ineffectual measures are adopted to prevent them.

When a drunken man has with much danger to his life staggered across the ice, and is about to land safely on the opposite side, he is prevented from so doing by the interference of the watchmen placed upon different points of the river to warn people from crossing. The man is accordingly sent back again, and is consequently doubly exposed to danger. Some few are lost in this way every season. A drunken coachman will occasionally get out of the regular track, and drive carriage, horses, and himself into

one of the open ice-holes. In spite of all this the accidents are not so numerous, however great the risks may be.

The long-expected breaking up of the ice, and the attendant departure of the bridge, allow amateurs to speculate deeply in these events. Just as in the previous autumn bets were taken upon the coming down of the ice from the Ladoga, so now are they laid upon the departure of the same from the river to the gulph. The bets run higher at this season, and are more varied; but the wager generally implies the swinging of the bridge from its holds; and a variety of causes may conspire to expedite or retard this event. If a large mass of ice press upon it, then it swings away immediately, but sometimes the ice is broken up in fragments before it comes to the bridge, and then it passes piecemeal under the arches. Woe to him who wagers upon certain days or hours, doubling the wager from day to day, or from hour to hour!

The river takes its rise from the Ladoga, thirty miles distant from the town; and, as the stream is very rapid as it rises from the lake, so it is at this point that disintegration of the ice first commences. This event is telegraphed from the fortress of Schlüsselberg, situated at the mouth of the river. The dissolution of the body is gradual; an isolated mass of ice loosened from its holds is carried down the stream, and pressing against a resisting mass forces it also to yield; as the floating particles increase from above, the pressure becomes greater and

the resistance less, and a channel is formed in the centre of the stream, for there the current is strongest, and this becomes freed long before the sides of the river. An impediment to the speedy dissolution of the whole mass is frequently afforded by the roads which cross the river, and which, being covered by a mixture of sand and snow trodden down, do not feel the sun's influence like the rest of the surface. Hence a piece of ice half a verst long will not force its way through them, so firm is the resistance which they offer, and it becomes necessary to saw the roads through. It is not uncommon to see people walking along these roads when all above and below them is a mass of floating ice. The whole of this process is often the source of great amusement. If the weather be warm and fine the quays are crowded with people amusing themselves with the sight of this disintegration of the mass; all eyes are directed towards the bridge, where the people and carriages throng; many get out of their vehicles and walk over, hurry through their business on the opposite side, anxious to retrace their steps before the bridge has swung away. A trifling circumstance may hasten or retard this event. When least expected, away it swings, and gain and loss are counted.

It is beautiful to witness the breaking up of a field of solid ice, which is in a semi state of decay. A large wedge comes down upon it, perhaps part of a road, insinuates itself into it, and breaking it through throws up its fluted spiculæ on each side in a thousand spangling forms. It is curious also to see the various

things which float down with the large pieces of ice. Boats stranded in the ice as they attempted to cross in the autumn; enclosures of rails made for the washerwomen; stacks of hay, suddenly carried away from the river's side; an unfortunate cow, plenty of dogs, all travelling gratis down the stream. I have seen a flock of geese, standing upon a floating island, pass through the centre of the town before they took wing.

A few hours suffice for the transit of the river ice into the gulph, for this takes place previous to the breaking up of the Ladoga. As soon as the river is clear, so that boats may cross, a cannon announces that the governor of the fortress has crossed: an ancient custom. Previous to this cannon shot no private boat can ply. As soon as the signal is given the stream is covered over with boats of all sizes.

This is the moment to see the Neva in all its glory —cleared of ice, and no bridges in the way to detract from its magnitude. It has the appearance of a large lake divided by an insular jet of land into two great branches. It flows slowly but majestically along, and its pure crystal stream reflects the dazzling sunbeam which plays upon its surface.

The view of Petersburg from a balcony of the English quay, which takes in many of the public buildings, and the splendid stream flowing through the centre of one of the finest cities in Europe, must be seen at this time to be duly appreciated. It is magnificent!

Those who have lost their fortunes upon the

bridge have a chance of redeeming them by the next financial operation, which consists in laying wagers upon the arrival of ships in Cronstadt. This is another very uncertain speculation, and seldom takes place for some days or even weeks after the departure of the Neva ice. There is no tide, no current in the gulph, so that the ice remains quiescent, till it is partly dissolved by heat and rain, or completely shivered to atoms by waves and wind. Large masses are often drifted on the shores.

Till this be accomplished, no ships can arrive; and the average term of their entering Cronstadt is about the fifth of May. Then the season, to use the factory term, commences. The navigation of the Baltic at this season is by no means safe nor comfortable. Ships leave England at various periods, and, if the winds are favourable, may arrive at the edge of the ice in the gulph, and remain starving there with cold for a fortnight before they can come into port. When the ice does begin to move, they are often in great danger, for they must drift at the good pleasure of the floating ice. The rudder is of no avail, and the sharp ice sometimes cuts them through, and they founder.

This may occur even more frequently in the autumn, when the ice is more hard and solid. Ships arrive within various distances of the port, when their progress is impeded by the discovery of a field of ice. Here they must remain till the following spring, unless some hurricane shall again break up the ice and allow them to proceed. It does occa-

sionally happen that the first winter dissolves, and a second commences. When fairly fixed at the edge of the ice, there they must remain, if no such extraordinary circumstance chance to free them. If ships are thus arrested within a mile of Cronstadt, a contract is formed with workmen to cut canals and tow them into port. The ship Archangel was caught and fixed in the ice seven versts below Cronstadt. A canal was sawed through at the expense of 150*l.* sterling. She had a valuable cargo. A ship which had accompanied her on her voyage was cut through by the ice and foundered. Such are the inconveniences of navigating the Baltic early and late in the season.

Fruit ships from Messina run all risks to land their cargoes as early as possible, in order to obtain the premium given by the Russian government (50*l.*) to the first ship which makes a Russian port in the spring. Such, then, is a general account of the white winter in Petersburg, which is, on an average, of seven months' duration.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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